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ABSTRACT

Implemented at a community center, this practicum developed an educational program which informed parents and teachers of ways to help children progress during and after divorce. Specific goals were: (1) to implement an educational program for parents, children, and teachers that focused on reducing the effects of divorce on children; (2) to sensitize parents to the importance of their role and to discuss ways in which they could contribute to their children's development after divorce; (3) to establish a program for children of divorce which would assist them in resolving feelings which interfered with coping; and (4) to assist teachers in their work with children of divorced parents. Practicum evaluation data indicated that the intervention was effective. The text of the practicum report provides an extensive discussion of alternative approaches to the problem, a description of solutions chosen for implementation, and a report of action taken. Nine pages of references are listed. Related materials are appended, including a structured questionnaire for children and administration booklets for two versions of Burkes' Behavior Rating Scales. (RH)

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PRACTICUM REPORT

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Center for the
Advancement of Education
Ed.D. Program

ESTABLISHING EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKSHOPS ON REDUCING CHILDREN'S VULNERABILITY AFTER DIVORCE: A FAMILY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

BY
SALLY SCHEIN

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NOVA UNIVERSITY

ESTABLISHING EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKSHOPS ON REDUCING CHILDREN'S VULNERABILITY AFTER DIVORCE: A FAMILY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

PRACTICUM II SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY
SALLY SCHEIN

NOVA UNIVERSITY
CLUSTER 15

June 1986

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ABSTRACT

Establishing Early Childhood Workshops on Reducing Children's Vulnerability After Divorce: A Family Educational Program. Schein, Sally, 1986: Practicum Report, Nova University Ed.D. Program in Early Childhood.
Descriptors: Preschool/Divorce/Parents/Curriculum/Early Childhood/Counseling Techniques/Esteem/Emotional Adjustment/Group Counseling.

This practicum addressed the need for educational workshops to be offered to young children and their parents who had experienced separation or divorce, and their teachers. A community survey as well as a review of the literature verified this need. The parents and children were in a period of turmoil and transition requiring an educational approach which included this particular affective area. This report describes the writer's attempt to reduce the children's vulnerability through structured activities and curriculum.

The goals of this practicum were: (a) to implement an educational program for parents, children, and teachers which would deal specifically with reducing the effects of divorce on children; (b) to sensitize parents to the importance of their role and to discuss ways in which they could contribute to their children's development after divorce; (c) to establish a program for children of divorce which would assist them in resolving feelings interfering with coping; and (d) to assist teachers in their work with children of divorce. Four systems of measurement were employed to evaluate the effectiveness of the program: pre and postrating scales, a questionnaire, a program evaluation form, and attendance.

Nine children met the behavior change criterion on the rating scales; 2 did show improvement; 2 did not improve in a positive direction. Eleven children increased their positive responses 80% on a structured questionnaire. Two did not progress to this point. Parents and teachers responded positively 100% of the time on the program evaluation form. Attendance requirements of 70% were met by 10 parents, 9 children, and all of the teachers.

Establishing Early Childhood Workshops on Reducing Children's Vulnerability After Divorce: A Family Educational Program

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

Township Apple is a nine-square-mile residential suburban community in north eastern America. One of its strengths is its convenient location for both living and commuting. It is minutes from a big International Airport and 18 miles southwest of Carson City. It is connected to surrounding towns and cities through major roadways and bus service. This includes the Border State Parkway, with entrances and exits within the township, and the Wonderland Turnpike within three miles.

Historically, the first white settlers came in 1667. Before that, the residents were the Unami clan of the Leni Lenape Indians. From 1666 to 1667, a group of Connecticut farmers rebelled against the strictness of Puritanism and bought the land from the Indians at 12-15 cents a mile.

On November 23, 1808, the Township of Apple was formed. It had a population of 1,428. Today it derives its power from the charter from which it was created and acts within prescribed limits set by the State Constitution. It has a municipal

government, a governing body with the power to make and administer laws, though they are not to be in conflict with state or federal laws. There are five elected committeepersons with the chairperson, as a courtesy title, called mayor. In 1857, Apple and other neighboring towns petitioned and formed Apple County.

Initially the township encompassed more acreage; but in 1901, 775 acres went to form another town. In 1907, 1,330 acres went to become an adjoining town and 410 acres to a city. In 1908, 1,730 acres went to become Hill Township. These areas along with four other communities border Township Apple. The first governor of the state resided in Township Apple and his home, constructed in the 1750s, became the center of Colonial life in the area. This mansion is presently privately preserved and is said to have been host to Jay, Jefferson, and Hamilton. Liberty Hall, an 18th Century mansion still intact, served as the headquarters for Washington and Lafayette. Connecticut Farms Church is another landmark whose origin predates the Revolutionary War. The township's past in Revolutionary history was tied in with many battles and skirmishes in and around the area as Washington and his troops traversed the township east and west in movements to Morristown.

During the period of 1900 to 1929, the township developed from a farm area to an industrialized community. A surge of building followed the Depression years. Many small factories were established between 1929 and 1941.

At this time, it is primarily a residential town with 73% of its land zoned as residential property. Three-quarters of the homes are single family units. The median value of the houses is $65,700. There are garden apartments, condominiums, and a senior citizen housing complex of 234 units. The number of housing units is 18,356. Only 6% of the land is presently vacant and no more multiple dwellings are allowed to be built.

Demographic data comes from the 1980 Census (Apple County, 1982). The population is 50,148 with 85.6% White and 13.4% Black. The remaining 1% includes Hispanic, American Indian, and Asian. The school age population consists of 16.7% of the total populace. Twenty-seven percent are over 55 years of age. The per capita income is $11,791 with a median family income of $32,860.

There are 132 members on the police force and 132 members in the fire department. There are emergency medical services with 40 volunteers and a driver. In addition, there is a Medical Emergency Mobile Intensive Care Unit available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Two major hospitals are nearby. There is a Board of Health and Environmental Protection with a Visiting Nurse Service and preventative health screenings for blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, vision, hearing, respiratory illness, and free flu immunizations. There are also two town libraries.

An active recreation department supervises the 27 parks. People of all ages are served, from preschool through a

Golden Age Club. For the handicapped, there is an arts and crafts program, bowling, swimming, an out-of-school socialization club, and a multi-learning disability playground.

Other facilities include, for example, a Jewish Community Center, a County Psychiatric Clinic, a YMCA and YMHA, and a Senior Day Care Center. Land College, a four-year state college with about 11,000 undergraduates and about 2,400 graduate students, along with a private business school and a technical school with 1,100 students enrolled are found within the township's borders.

In 1976, this township was one of nine cities awarded the title of "All American City" at an annual competition in Virginia. The township was cited for its cultural, recreational, and athletic programs as well as for its efforts regarding racial integration and the alleviation of poverty.

There are two parochial schools. The public school has a preschool program and an optional all-day kindergarten. There are seven elementary schools, two junior high schools, a high school, and adult school. The high school offers over 500 courses. The adult school is open for enrichment and remedial classes Saturdays and evenings. School enrollment for nursery is 623; kindergarten through elementary 4,776; and high school 2,963.

Writer's Work Setting, Roles, and Responsibilities

The writer has the position of Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant. Teaching experience and certification

includes early childhood education as well as being a certified school psychologist and licensed marriage and family counselor.

As a member of a child study team, involvement takes place from the beginning identification discussion of youngsters prior to an actual referral. Once the process is implemented, observation, record review, evaluation of the youngster, conferences with administrators, teachers, guidance team members, and parents occur. Opinions, concerns, and findings are shared; classification decisions are made and individual educational plans are jointly written. Included in this procedure is follow-through to the classroom, help with material suggestions, selections and teaching methods, if needed. As part of this consultant role, responsibility includes being available to students, parents, administrators, staff, and other agencies in the community.

The Community Center of Township Apple draws parts of its membership from the writer's town of employment. As a result of mutual contact, a meeting was held where concerns were shared for the parents and children experiencing the distress of divorce. The consequence was the establishment of an educational program to acquaint parents and teachers with ways to help children progress during and after divorce.

This program is the writer's responsibility at the Community Center.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

In the capacity of member of special services in the school district and also known to be a licensed marriage and family counselor, the writer is frequently asked to consult in cases where children's behavior is a cause of concern to others.

"Is it normal for Joseph to be thumb-sucking again at six when he gave that up long ago?"

"Jennifer is seven now and vacillates from being angry to weepy at home. Her teacher reports that she is withdrawing and is quieter at school. What do you think I should do?"

"Steve is throwing the blocks all over and is uncontrollable. I do not want to send him to the office again. Can you take him awhile? I think he had a bad weekend when his parents argued in front of him in their transfer exchange. It seems to be happening so often that I dread Mondays with him."

"Sarah is playing her car game over and over around a circle. She keeps repeating, 'See you next week'. I don't want to interfere if she is getting something out of this repetition, but I am beginning to worry if she just isn't stuck in the same place and can't get herself out alone. She was more sociable before her father left home than now."

"I am trying to be loving and helpful to the kids, but they seem to blame me for everything. It seems I get the brunt of it all."

LeShan (1973) mentioned a cartoon in a magazine of a mother sitting on a sand dune reading to her little boy from a book of children's poems. He is looking up at her very earnestly and saying, "Do Jack and Jill still live together?" (p. 73).

Divorce is very much with us. Participants of its immediate impact involve the school and the community services through their contact with the parents and children. Others, too, are affected as friends and relatives. The actual significance of divorce is felt by the witnesses. Yet though those expected to be offering supportive programs have been touched, they seemingly often remain motionless. It is a distressing event. However, as with most tragedies, it is expected that adjustment will occur; life will go on. An attitude expressed goes something like this: "There are organizations and alternatives available to people. It is up to those concerned to seek them."

Until now, this writer's school system has not felt this was an issue they would become involved with; it can become so personal. There are so many problems needing attention. Child abuse and suicide are receiving an impetus through state supported programs. There are peer development groups at the high school and junior high school levels. If divorce remains or becomes a topic, the youngsters certainly can deal with it there. Will that be enough?

The spoken concerns continue to pour into the writer's office. Teenagers are telling of fantasies of their parents

reconciling, even when they are now on their third marriages. Another youngster does not remember his father, but expresses continuing thoughts of a very "idealized" figure. This person will be found and father and son will have a wonderful relationship, dissolving all the pain presently felt.

The emotional level of development of the child at which the actual separation or divorce occurred appears to be retained. Now, at this older age, certain signaling behaviors, alerting others to be concerned, are not there. Maybe school potential is not quite being reached but that is true for other adolescents from intact homes. It is not unusual. Peer relationships seem to have an exaggerated sense of dependence, with quick arousal of feelings of jealousy and disappointment.

Every separation or not making contact at the moment of need becomes vastly important. These seem like earlier, younger feelings affecting the present lives of these youngsters. They no longer may be festering wounds, but they certainly seem to be raw and sensitive ones. Their sense of belonging, their capacity to trust, to love and be loved and to sustain interpersonal relationships seems affected. Teachers report a sensitivity, volatileness; but overall state, "So-and-so seems basically well adjusted in school." Looking through their past records and speaking with their custodial parent corroborated that they showed more concerning behaviors at younger ages and in earlier grades, at the time of and immediately following parental separation or divorce.

Both educationally and therapeutically, it has been shown that if one is going to discipline in a meaningful way, the intervention should be related to the act and time of the happening. This is also known for crisis intervention. The most efficient time to help a person going through a suffering and grieving state is during the actual experience, when their defenses are down and they are more receptive to change. Once a solution has become functional, whether optimally adaptive or not, it will become more difficult for the individual to give it up.

Goode (1966), in his classic study of 425 formerly married women in Detroit, found that divorce certainly does seem to breed divorce. More than half of his subjects were from divorced homes. In addition, the percentage of those whose children eventually chose to end their own marriages was noticeably higher than average.

Presently, according to the United States Bureau of the Census (1980), nearly one out of every five children under the age of 18 goes home to only one parent, mostly due to divorce. Over 12 million children have been subjected to parental divorce. The writer's suburban work setting and the Community Center have their share of these societal numbers, along with the crises and changes which accompany them.

The social stigma of divorce has lessened. It is almost accepted as a fact of life. Negative attention from classmates and ridicule from peers are no longer main issues. Coping,

adjusting, continuing to develop through this is a major task for children and their families. Reactions to separation and divorce do vary by age, sex, and emotional development; but a sense of disequilibrium and distress are natural at the time.

The average length of a first marriage is 6.8 years according to the U. S. Census. Thus, the greatest number of children involved are in their early childhood years. The problem that is occurring is that young children of separation and divorce are more frequently referred by staff because of their behavior than others. This stress is not being dealt with as a separate educational issue.

Problem Documentation

Early in 1985, a program committee of seven produced a survey in order to elicit Center members' opinions on the current curriculum and ideas for future programs. The number of areas covered was quite extensive. One survey for early childhood education projects was given through the youth director to teachers of the preschool and latchkey programs. This involved approximately 95 children: 47 latchkey; 22 preschoolers, ages birth to 4 years; and 26 children, 4½ to 6½ years of age.

In addition to crafts, creative projects, and health areas such as aerobics and yoga, religious activities and cultural events, the committee reported that "The survey is in keeping with the philosophy of chronological pluralism, meaning from

the young toddlers to senior citizens, everyone is mainstreamed into life-enriching activities in an environment that stresses family values and intergenerational contact."

The areas of identified needs were:

"1. Senior citizen volunteers in the nursery school to tell stories, listen, help with social skills, and to provide a hug and a smile when needed.

2. A series of workshops for adults in keeping in step with stepparenting.

3. Parent workshops on separation and divorce" (Piel, M., Rubin, R., and Smith, J., 1985, Community Center Survey Results, p. 3).

The teacher survey concurred with the mutual benefits of involving senior citizens with the children. The teachers again voiced their concerns with the behavior of the children who had experienced separation and divorce and requested that more direct classroom teacher assistance and materials be provided.

As a result of these findings and in consideration of the shared concerns for this population, the establishment of this project evolved through meetings with the Center director, adult school committee, and youth director.

Analysis of the Problem

There is a lack of educational programs designed to help the parents, teachers, and children of early childhood who have

experienced the stress of divorce. Seven causes were identified. One of the reasons was that within the school system the role of the special services personnel is functioning primarily as dictated by Federal Law P.L. 94-142, which involves classification for special education purposes, according to 11 specified labels. Though many of the youngsters are from divorced families, only if their emotional difficulties are severe enough will they warrant classification and receive services. New Jersey Administrative Code Chapter 28 (1984) defines emotionally disturbed as "the exhibiting of seriously disordered behavior over an extended period of time which adversely affects educational performance and may be characterized as . . . an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships; behaviors inappropriate to the circumstances, such as a general or pervasive mood of depression or the development of physical symptoms or irrational fears." Youngsters meeting this definition are fully evaluated by the child study team and consulting psychiatrist. They are classified and an individual educational plan is jointly made with the team, parents, and involved staff.

This definition leaves a large number of children who do not meet these requirements, but do need servicing. These children are not emotionally disturbed--they are going through a traumatic event and reacting appropriately or naturally to their equilibrium having been shaken. In the school setting, there is short-term counseling offered with the goal that,

after a few sessions, referrals to outside agencies will be given. Both of these approaches have the implication of pathology at their base and thus do not meet the need of the identified population.

The second cause was that the thrust of the school system at this time is to improve the quality of education through rigorous requirements and testing standards for promotion. Remediation after failure, not prevention, is the present sequence for students.

Thirdly, neither the board of education, superintendent, special services director, or administration were supportive of additional nonacademic programs at this time. They have clearly stated: "We cannot be all things to all people." Their limitations of budget, time, and space were realistic. They have initiated pilot programs in other areas. Recent fundings reflect budgetary cutbacks.

The Center had a series of workshops for parents conducted by their early childhood director about five years ago. Until their recent survey, despite continuing awareness of the problem, they had hesitated to include new scheduling due to budgetary limitations, necessitating prioritizing and restricting the number of selections. Thus, the fourth cause which was within the community had also been financial restraints. An additional fifth complication had been a reluctance to segregate or focus on one segment only of the child care population.

According to Herst (1985), over 50% of mothers with children ages 3 to 5 are working. Over one-third of single-parent working families, most of them headed by women, live in poverty. One child in five living in a single-parent home is the result of an out-of-wedlock birth, not divorce. One of the federally supported programs is the Social Services Block Grant. Twenty-two preschool children at the Center are the beneficiaries of this federal grant. The question that arises is how much are the children suffering the effects of separation or divorce, or is it poverty which is the key?

Hodges, Tierney, and Buchsbaum (1984) investigated the increasing effect of stressful events on preschool children. According to this study, coming from a divorced family did not predict aggression, acting out toward parents, and school concentration problems. An older-age mother coupled with perceived or actual income problems predicted adjustment problems independent of marital status. An inadequate income coupled with coming from a divorced family did heighten anxiety in the children. Different sources of stress resulted in varied adjustment difficulties or coping patterns. Thus divorce effects on early childhood youngsters remain a concern, though they are clearly not the only important factors for this age group.

A sixth cause of problem behaviors was the more minimal contact between mother and child or custodial parent and child due to employment. Here it was the actual change of circumstances.

not yet being used to being without one parent for such an extended period of time.

McBride (1973) wrote, "We have to talk about the growth and development of parents whenever we talk about the growth and development of children because the two are so interrelated" (p. iii). Humans are always in the process of change, and each person in the environment has an effect one upon the other. Parents are not only change agents, they are also being changed. This separation may well be different for all the participants and may affect the child's school adjustment. Here the problem and the cure are intertwined. The school, day care, or latchkey program meets the parent-child need for a supervised setting, but appears to lengthen the hours of absence. The young child cannot really understand why the separation from the parent is necessary nor can he/she understand the cause-and-effect realities involved.

A seventh factor was parental lack of understanding of child development and inappropriate expectancies which also contributed to the situation. The simplest rote tasks in any employment require some knowledge and training. Raising a human being requires so much more. Yet, the recognition of parent education as important is relatively new. As members of this generation have increasingly come to terms with themselves as individuals and in new life styles, they are also seeking ways to become better parents. They need to have access to literature and programs, especially if divorce has detracted from their own sense of adequacy.

Through the ongoing sharing of mutual school and community concerns, the need for the establishment of a program for early childhood parents, teachers, and children was validated. The Center did wish to be responsive through its support and initiation of this project. The Center has committed itself to perpetuation of this service as long as it appears warranted. This year's series of workshops will have served as its model.

The Related Literature

The first part of the review of literature will deal with the immediate effects of divorce and the factors influencing them. The second part will emphasize studies which provide implications for a solution strategy.

There has been rather extensive research trying to ferret out the problems caused to children by separation and divorce. The focus has been on the effects, the sex and ages at which children are most vulnerable, the type of concerns that they have, and parental adjustments after divorce.

We are aware that developing children are in a constant process of change. The period of childhood involves many tasks in the course of growing up. It inevitably involves experiencing turmoil and pain; that is, normal development involves conflict and finding ways to resolve it. The aim is to avoid stress which will be beyond the child's ability to handle.

Separation and divorce do have a psychological impact on children. The extent and influence include external

environmental factors, as well as the child constitutionally, and the actual stage he/she is in.

Children are very different from adults. Children do not make any contracts with their parents. They do not have the ability to take a long view of things. They are in transitional states. According to Freud (1965), it is not the event but how the child interprets or misinterprets it. Dynamic struggles and misinterpretations can change a child's emotional life from attachment to parents to withdrawal; from love and good will to resentment and hostility; from feeling cherished to feeling rejected and worthless. Again, it is not the event, but the reaction to it.

Both the Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) and Francke (1983) studies found that different age children have different immediate reactions to divorce. Regressive behavior such as thumbsucking and bedwetting is prominent in preschoolers through age 5. They show bedtime anxiety, disturbed sleep, and nightmares. Irritability, agressive behavior, and expressions of fear of abandonment are seen. The 3- to 5-year-olds feel a sense of guilt; some turn to denial or fantasy as a defense at this age. Six to 8-year-olds show the most intense sadness. They resist pressure to be disloyal and retain loyalty to both parents. They deny feeling responsible and cling to reconciliation wishes. The 9- to 12-year-olds feel anxious, lonely, grieved, caught up in loyalty conflicts, and most of all feel anger. The teenagers, 13- to 18-year-olds, show anger

and false maturity. The sex of the child does make a difference. Boys respond with more grief and sadness than girls of the same age. The toll and pervasiveness of the effects on boys seem to come from several factors according to studies reported by Blades, Gosse, Rogers, and McKay (1984). About 90% of young children are in custody of their mothers. Boys tend to feel rejected by their fathers. They are identified negatively with them by their mothers, and mothers treat girls with more consideration. The child's vulnerabilities are based on and determined by a combination of factors.

Further support of this theory came from Hetherington (1981) in suggesting that factors which existed prior to the divorce, both in the family and the child, could play a major role in the child's reaction to divorce. She also stated that, "When children experience divorce as a single stressor, it carries no appreciable risk; it is when they are exposed to chronic or concurrent stresses that adverse effects increase" (p. 67).

Hodges, Wechsler, and Ballantine (1979) also found that stress for young children may well be cumulative. Their study showed that divorce, in conjunction with younger parents, financial problems, and geographic family mobility, resulted in greater maladjustment. This was not true for intact families to which they concluded, "Perhaps these familial strains are tolerable in the context of a stable family relationship" (p. 62).

Buchsbaum, Hodges, and Tierney (1984) studied the effects of divorce as an additional life stress for preschool children. Their study enlisted mothers from seven private preschools in Denver, Colorado. The mothers volunteered to participate in research about parenting in families. Sixty of the mothers were from intact relationships, 30 were divorced. Mothers and teachers completed behavioral checklists on the 44 boys and 46 girls. The parental life events had the most effect on the preschool children. "What emerges in this study is the importance of the psychological climate of the home and the centrality of economic conditions for adjustment in the preschool child" (p. 616).

Bane (1979) reported that there are usually financial changes causing additional adjustments. For example, sometimes a parent formerly at home becomes employed; a complete neighborhood and, thus, school move may also occur. During such changes family members seek many different ways to cope with their stresses. It is not just the divorce itself.

According to Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (1979), there were several factors related to time and effects of the divorce on children. The initial year following divorce showed that separated households were more disorganized than family-intact homes. Children were more likely to be late for school, eat at separate times from their custodial parent, and have a more erratic bedtime.

Wallerstein and Kelly, in their 1980 chronicle of their California study which consisted of a sample of 60 divorced families including 131 children from ages 2-18, found that one-half of all children felt distress and disruption at the time of separation. No matter how bad the family was, the children felt that it offered them support and protection. "Only a few children in our study thought their parents were happily married, yet the overwhelming majority preferred the unhappy marriage to the divorce" (p. 10). One of the biggest threats to a child's security is the breakup of the family. It is a time of disruption for everyone.

Goldstein and Solnit (1984) said even where the environment has been surrounded with conflict and tension for the child, the breakup of the family may be immediately experienced as catastrophic or massively threatening because it disrupts what he has learned to trust. "He may feel puzzled, confused, and frightened because his sense of security, which was based on living with both parents has been shaken" (p. 17). They pointed out that behavioral reactions should be viewed within the context of development. "The same behavior disturbances have different meanings at different ages in terms of the intensity of a child's reaction and what he portends for his development. A 5-year-old child's return to bedwetting is not as alarming as a 12-year-old's. And a 3-year-old's taking a candy bar from a drugstore counter is less worrisome than a teenager's shoplifting" (p. 21). No matter what, some reaction to such a family upheaval is expected.

The literature supports that though children might be aware of problems in the parental marriage they still do not want a divorce to occur. This is an initial reaction thought to be related to fear regarding being wanted or cared for.

After a decision has been reached, the children should be told. This appears another area in the sequence of divorce which appears to have an effect on the children. One of the most frightening aspects of the many changes that divorce brings is a sense of not having control over what is happening. Being in control of one's world gives the confidence to the child to go ahead and attempt mastery of each new developmental task. Eighty percent of preschool children in Wallerstein and Kelly's study were not told ahead; some awoke to find a parent gone. Certainly, momentarily at least, they could not have felt in control.

Gardner (1977) wrote, "Practically no advance warning is clearly as damaging as in the subjugation of children to every ambivalent decision. There is less danger, in my opinion, in the child's being told in advance and much to argue for it. A few weeks in advance appears to be the optimum time for this disclosure in most families" (p. 67). Goldstein and Solnit also wrote of telling the children and suggested "be honest" in what you say and try to explain in a way which is appropriate for their age. Grollman (1975) emphasized telling children and letting them know what it means in terms of their future. If there are questions that you do not know the answers to, then

let children know that arrangements are being worked out. "Honesty is the only policy . . . . Once the matter is out in the open, it can be faced, for then it is not quite so frightening" (p. 57). Each of these authors believe that the manner in which children were informed was an important factor in their future adjustment. Each recommended that parents mutually tell the children and stress that both are responsible.

Kurdek and Kiesky (1981) conducted a study with 71 "divorced single custodial parents and their 130 children who ranged in age from 5-19 years of age" (p. 85). Parent and child questionnaires were administered. The results indicated that favorable reactions and adjustments were seen in children whose parents defined divorce in terms of psychological separation in clear terms indicating the reason was that the parents had grown apart from each other to such an extent that they were no longer happy living together. The focus was on the parents and their incompatibility. This did help the children in their realization that they were not to blame and that reconciliation was unlikely. There is a relationship between the way the explanation is given and the child's perception of divorce. Parents who shared in the mutual explanation of divorce had children who were least likely to feel different than their friends and told their friends about it more readily. These children were able to acquire strengths and responsibility in their adjustment, negative effects were minimized.

This section of the review has demonstrated a number of the factors contributing to the duration and intensity of the child's reaction to the impact of divorce. The following material will illustrate that the role of the parent-child relationship along with the parental relationship to each other are major elements in determining the child's post-divorce adjustment.

In a study by Isaacs and Levin (1984), the "Draw a Family" test was administered to school age children. This was utilized in order to determine the child's perceptions of the family composition, comparative sizes of their parents, and their own creativity or constriction as projected onto their drawings. The study was conducted during the first year and the following year after experiencing separation. Though it was felt that further study was needed, several elements were present for consideration. Initially, the fathers were drawn as the same size or larger. Drawings during the second year showed more variation. The fathers were sometimes smaller, in a separate spot, or frequently omitted. The nature of the parental relationship after the separation was established as a pertinent factor affecting the child's perception of the father in the family. The authors related the factor of size as representing the power, the "in charge" person. They found that if the mother had a neutral relationship with the father, she was drawn as equal to or taller than he was. When the mother reported a hostile relationship, the father was drawn as larger. Unlike intact families, no custodial parent was omitted from

the drawings. In addition, where conflict existed, the children showed increasing constriction and loss of creativity. Some of the families had received professional intervention related to separation. Of the children so involved, none showed a drop in creativity in any time period following separation.

A private case reported by Klein (1984) was used to demonstrate how demanding the role of a single parent can be. The primary issue involved a 7-year-old youngster with learning disabilities needing specific attention. Both parents had felt overwhelmed by having a special education child. This was an added factor of separation stress for them. The mother felt protective of her son, the father felt inadequate and made himself unavailable. Professional help proved to be valuable to this couple. Then practical steps became possible. Detailed arrangements were planned cooperatively in sessions and then carried out to the benefit of all.

A continuation of meaningful attachment bonds between parents and children can reduce major stresses associated with the divorce, according to Ahrons (1980). Hetherington (1981) wrote that it is through parents' availability, rules, and external controls that the child learns the necessary skills of internal control. And the child's interpersonal definition of self, according to Erikson (1963), is based on this parent-child relationship.

According to Keshet and Rosenthal (1980), only 40% of children of divorce see their fathers regularly and only 33%

of children of separation see their fathers regularly. Three parental behaviors, according to these authors, help minimize the negative effects of divorce. They are: "(a) being able to separate the roles of husband and father; (b) believing that there are parental rights; (c) nonadversary conflict reducing mechanisms, supporting each other as 'good parents'" (p. 142).

Wallerstein and Kelly also concluded that parents' attitudes count most. They documented that problems that children have are due more to postdivorce time-sharing arrangements and interparental conflict than any other factors. They also found that the interest that fathers have in their children after divorce is unrelated to their relationship with them before. The highest predictors of good outcomes for the children were regular and continuing contact with both parents and reduced acrimony.

Jacobson (1978) interviewed 30 families, "51 children ranging in age from 3-17, all of whom had experienced marital separation in the 12-month period prior to the first research interview" (p. 178). His results confirmed many previous findings regarding the amount of contact between children and their noncustodial father. The children who maintained frequent contact with their fathers showed fewer concerning behaviors and better coping skills. There were highly significant differences found in the children whose parents continued habitual conflicts compared to those showing a reduction of such interactions. Parents who were able to set

aside past hostility and to cooperate had very positive influences on their child's adjustment.

Nelson (1981), as a result of his study, recommended promoting "civil relationships between the ex-spouses following divorce" as an intervention which improves adjustment in the mother and child (p. 81). Support for a parent education program is substantiated by the literature. It is easy to understand that children in early childhood settings who have experienced separation and divorce will show behaviors which teachers will be concerned about.

Francke (1983) referred to the school as "the second family" in her chapter, Divorce and the Schools. Jones (1977) saw the school as a place of continuity and support. Wilkinson and Bleck (1977) believed that children's divorce groups should be conducted in schools in a structured format using activities and games. They suggested that since the teacher is the first to notice and is there as a support on a long-term basis, the teacher is in a position to help. Rofes (1981) edited a book by and for children written by a class with the help of teacher facilitators on the subject of divorce. They also formed a club which they described as helping youngsters of divorce discuss problems with each other and give support. Hammond (1981) described counseling groups to help children. Bradford, Adams, Brisacher, Broadus, and Grant (1982) agreed that with the frequency of divorce and the effect on school aged children, this is a topic which should be included in school guidance

and counseling services. Leerhsen, Gonzalez, Tibbetts, and Williams (1985) concluded in their overview that educators are beginning to and do have to address the topic of divorce with children. These are not really research based studies primarily, but a philosophical stance.

In summary, the review of the literature showed that divorce affects the children, parent behaviors are very important in determining the children's adjustment, and that teachers and the schools can be involved and provide services.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Statement of General Goals

The goals projected for this practicum were the following: (a) to plan and implement an educational program for parents, children, and teachers which deals specifically with reducing the effects of divorce on children; (b) to sensitize parents to the importance of their role and to discuss ways in which they can contribute to their children's development following divorce; (c) to establish a program for the children of divorce; (d) to conduct a series of staff meetings with the teachers of the children of divorce; (e) to survey the participants upon completion of the program in order to ascertain its value to them; and (f) for the program to be included in future offerings.

Behavioral Expectations

The educational program attempted to accomplish the following five objectives:

1. The children will know that though their parents are divorced, they still have a mother and a father. Parents do not divorce children.

2. The children will not be message carriers for either of their parents.

3. The children will not expect their parents to reconcile.

4. The children will not feel guilty or at fault for the divorce.

5. The children will be aware that others share their concerns.

These objectives were measured by a pre and postprogram structured questionnaire, writer observed comment and behavior during the program including good attendance by the child, and parent and staff pre and postprogram responses to a behavioral rating scale (see Figure 1).

Evaluation Instruments

Four systems of measurement were employed in this practicum. They were The Burks' Behavior Rating Scales, a Structured Questionnaire, a Program Evaluation Form, and attendance at meetings.

There was a pre and postadministration of the Burks' Behavior Rating Scales and the Structured Questionnaire. The attendance form was used at all meetings and considered in the analysis of the final results. The Program Evaluation Form was administered after the final meeting of the complete program.

The Burks' Behavior Rating Scales

The Burks' Behavior Rating Scales (permission for use, see Appendix A) (Scales, see Appendices B and C) have been standardized and found to be reliable and valid. According to Burks (1983), it has proven to be particularly useful to "2. Show changes in behavior over a period of time . . . . 6. When used by both parents and teachers" (p. 5).

The Scales contain 110 items and 5 descriptive statements, numbered 1 through 5. The respondents chose the most

Figure 1.

Expected Behaviors	Assessment Instrument	Success Criterion
1. Parents and staff members will indicate a reduced number of concerning behaviors by the children	1. Burks' Behavior Rating Scales	1. Seventy-five percent of the concerning behaviors identified for each child on the pretest will indicate a downward shift from very significant to not significant on the rating scales after the 10-month implementation
2. Children will respond individually with more positive answers than at the start of the program	2. Structured Questionnaire	2. Ninety percent of the children will respond positively to 80% (16 out of 20) of the items on the Structured Questionnaire after the 10-month implementation
3. Parents and staff will make positive comments about the program	3. Program Evaluation Form	3. Seventy-five percent of the parents and staff will respond positively to 75% (3 of 4 yes-no items) on the Program Evaluation Form after the 10-month implementation
4. All participants will attend the program sessions with a minimal amount of absence occurring	4. Attendance Forms	4. Each parent, child, and staff member will attend at least 70% of the program sessions

appropriate descriptive statement, making a quantifying judgment and placing the number in the box opposite the item. In this way, the rater determined the degree of behavior observed in the child. The scorer then tallied and profiled the results into categories of significant, very significant, or not significant. Parents and teachers were the raters. The writer was the scorer. After the 10-month implementation, the scales were administered again in order to obtain the postprogram results.

The expected behaviors were for parents and staff members to indicate a reduced number of concerning behaviors by the children. The assessment instrument was the Burks' Behavior Rating Scales. The success criterion was that 75% of the concerning behaviors identified for each child on the pretest would indicate a downward shift from significant to not significant on the rating scales after the 10-month implementation.

The Structured Questionnaire

The Structured Questionnaire (see Appendix D) was read to members of the children's group at the first meeting. The writer administered the questions individually after the meeting.

The Structured Questionnaire was formulated to reflect the objectives of the children's program as well as to provide data for individual follow-up, if it became necessary. Comments made by the children were noted.

There was a postprogram administration on an individual basis after the last meeting. Comments were noted. A review and debriefing took place. If there was any need for follow-up, this was discussed.

The expected behaviors were for the children to respond individually with more positive answers than at the start of the program. The Structured Questionnaire was the assessment instrument. The success criterion was for 90% of the children to respond positively to 80% of the items on the Structured Questionnaire after the 10-month program implementation.

Program Evaluation Form

This form is a six-item questionnaire assessing the participant's evaluation of the benefit of the program to him/her. Four of the items were to be answered with a yes or no response (see Appendix E).

The expected behaviors were that the parents and staff would make positive comments about the program. The Program Evaluation Form was the assessment instrument. The success criterion was that 75% of the parents and staff would respond positively to 75% of the items (three of four yes-no items) on the Program Evaluation Form after the 10-month implementation.

Attendance Forms

Attendance was taken at each parent, child, and teacher meeting. The expected behaviors were that all participants would attend the program sessions with a minimal amount of

absence occurring. The assessment instrument was the Attendance Form (see Appendix F). The success criterion was that each parent, child, and staff member would attend at least 70% of the program sessions.

Though the evaluation instruments resulted in correlational data, statistical tests were not applied. Instead, percentages of alteration in responses and behaviors, program evaluation, and attendance as described in the success criterion above served as the standards of program success.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Divorce and its consequences have been the subject of an increasing number of investigations. Bloom, Asher, and White (1978) found that "studies converge on identifying a small but important number of problems faced by persons undergoing marital disruption. Included in such a list were a generally weakened social support system, the need to work through the variety of psychological reactions to the disruption, assistance with issues in child-rearing, resocialization, and help with such practical problems as finances, educational and employment planning, housing and homemaking, and protection of legal rights" (p. 879). The literature indicated that the initial disruption occurred whether or not it was a desired and mutual decision to divorce, and irrespective of the quality of the marriage.

Studies on the effect of divorce on children have focused on different levels of vulnerability as associated with age, development, and sex. In recent years, programs attempting to mitigate the immediate experience of loss and shaken feelings regarding competency have been initiated in a variety of settings. The way to reduce children's vulnerability after divorce is being sought. The writer surveyed the literature for previous solutions.

Mental health centers and clinics, in response to the increasing awareness that divorcing people need help with the process, are offering a new specialty: divorce therapy. Staff members from psychiatry, psychology, and social work now have specific expertise and training to offer their clients. Overall, the results of this approach have been quite favorable.

Mediation in divorce settlements is also congruent with knowledge of the needs of children. On January 1, 1981, "the mandatory mediation law" went into effect in California. The field of mediation is still evolving and the mediator or team might be a therapist or a lawyer or both. Mediation focuses on the best interests of the child. It certainly strives for workable and lasting agreements reducing the turmoil which generally follows separation and divorce. It represents a viable solution.

As the effects of divorce impact on the child's behavior, school systems have been drawn into the search for solutions on how to help children cope. They have responded in different ways. In some school systems there is a general policy in effect that behavioral problems are to be referred to other agencies. Others have taken the stance that since academic achievement is affected and the ability to get along well with other children, divorce is a topic which ought to be included in school services. Through seeking ways to reduce children's vulnerability after divorce and to foster a better adjustment within classroom settings, the writer has come to believe that

parent, child, and teacher need to be a part of the solution in school settings.

The mediation alternative, divorce therapy, and school programs were explored. Though they have been successful in states where these services have not been mandated, they can seem particularly expensive. Many families of separation and divorce are experiencing financial difficulties and do not seek these particular avenues for support, but the more traditional legal route.

The Mediation Alternative

Mediation does appear to be an ideal approach for reducing conflicts and fostering instead a cooperative means to solve problems. The atmosphere is conducive to taking broad approaches to resolution. The children can also retain in their minds that their parents were involved together in the decision making, not that someone else handed down a decision.

As mediation has become a benefit more frequently chosen than in the past, there has been an increase in favoring joint custody arrangements. It does appear that when the decisions are made through this process, competition is replaced by cooperation. The working together is of benefit to the children.

In reviewing this alternative, one realizes this is not a simple process. Participants arrive with their worries and mixed agenda. The option to give up and go the route of the court is always present. Both sides tell their story and try to enlist the support of the mediator.

Wallerstein (1981) referred to child custody mediation as a very special type requiring the mediator to remain the advocate for the children. That individual needs to be knowledgeable about child development, broad psychological functioning, family systems, and how to promote behavioral changes.

While a mediator is in the role of lawyer and psychotherapist, that is hardly the total. It is the information obtained through the children and the insight and sensitivity in utilizing this information to meet the children's needs that becomes the most important factor, rather than winning the case as a lawyer. It is also not a psychotherapeutic process in attempting to provide the clients with understanding and strategies to handle emotional distress and behavior more effectively.

Mediation involves structure. Saponsnek (1983) considered two ground rules essential. One related to remaining in the present, except for specific background information that he asked for, and focusing on the children's needs and how they can best be met. Secondly, he requested I-messages to be used. Accusatory statements were not acceptable. "Speak for yourself, about yourself."

In explaining options, he stated, "Joint legal custody means that each of you will have equal privilege and responsibility for decision making about your children. Minor day-to-day decisions need to be made by the parent whom the children are with at any particular time . . . so allow yourself to be flexible, creative, and compromising" (p. 70).

The goal of mediation is not personal growth for the parties involved but to create a final agreement. The results of work in this setting have been fruitful and certainly relate to areas of common concern. However, the emphasis is on harmony through the process of making divorce decisions, custody, and financial arrangements. Nevertheless, it is not an educational program for the parents in order to help them understand the conceptions and misconceptions, the fears, and the fantasies that are common experiences for children of divorce.

Divorce Therapy

Both couple and group work are format approaches to the "treatment" of divorcing couples. In some studies, the courts ordered the participants into counseling services. In many studies, the members of the divorce drama elected to take this time of crisis to learn about themselves, their past, and expectations for the future.

Brown and Manela (1977) reported on the experience of "429 men and women with a court-related marriage and divorce counseling service" (p. 294). The purpose of this investigation was to determine client satisfaction. Clients were interviewed at the intake counseling session and four months later. The assessment instrument was the client interview. The success criterion was for clients to report on the agency services as helpful or not helpful to them. Seventy-five percent of the participants saw the service as helpful. The clients reporting

the most satisfaction attended the highest number of sessions. They committed themselves to meeting attendance.

Sobota and Cappas (1979) distributed semantic differential rating scales to two independent samples of participants attending a lecture series on divorce adjustment. Four sessions were given as the program. The first session was an overview of feelings usually associated with divorce. The second lecture dealt with the grief-bereavement process. The third lecture involved the impact of divorce on children. The fourth lecture dealt with social areas after the divorce and readjustments. They used the Semantic Differential Rating Scales as their assessment instrument. The success criterion was an attitude change in the first group and a statistically significant change at the .05 level for the second group, five months later. The results did show seven significant attitude shifts. They were in a positive direction for self-concept, divorce and separation, the present, and the children. The area delineated as former spouse showed a negative attitude shift. The format of this study was educational, not therapeutic. The meetings took place in a community church setting.

Young (1978a) evaluated a family court required program for participants filing for divorce. The total sample consisted of 75 women and 15 men. A four-hour workshop was presented over a nine-week period, on a weekly basis. The average size of each meeting was 13. The program focused on the legal process, children and divorce, personal feelings, stages and expectations.

The assessment instrument was a pre and postworkshop questionnaire. The success criteria were the particular items on the questionnaire rating the program positively, expressing a benefit, and stating they would attend this program on their own. The total results were positive: "91% of the participants indicated that they would 'attend on their own' . . . . Fifty-eight percent felt that they would see future benefits. Seventy-one percent said that they would be willing to attend longer programs and 'indicated that they wanted more'" (p. 44).

Young (1978b) conducted a three-month follow-up on the predivorce workshop. A numerically coded form, to insure anonymity, was sent to program participants. Twenty-six questionnaires were returned. Twenty-two suggested longer programs. In answer to the question about having "experienced any long-term benefits from the workshop", 61% felt that they had received benefits (p. 53). Regarding willingness to attend a follow-up workshop at this point, 54% indicated an interest in doing that. Overall, participants responding to the form showed sustained satisfaction, though there was a percentage decline in enthusiasm, from 71% to 54%. The lack of knowledge about the 64 participants not completing the follow-up questionnaires makes it difficult to really assess the effectiveness of the program.

Thiessen, Avery, and Joanning (1980) reported on a communication training program to promote postdivorce adjustment. The participants consisted of 13 divorcees. As "the experimental group," they "received 15 hours of training in

interpersonal communication skills" and on postdivorce informational matters (p. 35). The 15 members of the control group received no treatment. Two scales were administered before the beginning of the program and a week after completion: the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. These are self-report measures. The results indicated that the treatment group did make changes while the control group did not. There was an increase in overall adjustment and empathy skills on the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale but not on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. There were some positive changes in self-esteem but not to a level of significance.

Kressel and Deutsch (1977) conducted in-depth interviews with 21 therapists on "constructive divorce" and how to achieve it. "A constructive divorce is one in which the psychic divorce has been successfully completed and certain conditions prevail . . . with regard to the protection of 'the welfare of the children'" (p. 419). The results revealed little agreement on the focus or the strategies employed in divorce therapy. In this study, they covered a very wide range and the format varied from individual to family to group therapy. More agreement was shown regarding the need to take a viewpoint of the historical patterns from past to present. They saw their role as educational in this review for awareness-getting. The one area where the therapists were in complete agreement was that they were to function on behalf of protecting the welfare of minor children. Their focus was on arriving at a

cooperative emotional climate, extricating the children from the parental battlefield.

Divorce is recognized today as a solution to certain marital difficulties. The process of disengaging is stressful and does involve pain. Adjustment groups or individual therapy seem to help participants in getting through this emotional trauma. More basic research does seem to be needed. There are few controlled studies. Most often correlational data is used. Significant client and therapist variables, theoretically, should be controlled. Many of the studies might be of increased interest if results of longer follow-ups were available. Initial program response might be more positive or negative, or have "thank-you-for-your-program" aspects to them that would be ferreted out through the test of time.

School Programs: A Resource for Support

Increasing numbers of children are experiencing separation, divorce, or family reconstitutions. Teachers, special services personnel, and guidance counselors often become the resource people for these children and their families. Poor academic progress or behavioral changes alert conscientious parents and staff to seek additional support. Courses, counseling programs, projects, after-school latchkey programs, workshops, and clubs have come into being for children of divorce.

Bowker (1982) conducted an in-school program with two groups of fifth-grade students of divorce from 16 families.

Parents granted permission for participation. Only one parent later removed her child from the program after it began. The group "met weekly during the school year." The focus of the program was on "issues and feelings involved when family breakup occurs" (p. 127). Each child was interviewed individually and the goals of the program were discussed. The program format was the production of a story and a script. Each child recorded a story and a script and then it was coordinated with the film strip. The group entitled the resulting sound film strip "Being in Between." The group facilitator was the elementary school counselor. The outcomes appeared to be particularly positive. A concrete, very tangible product resulted. In the process, feelings were explored, expressed, and then organized with a creative purpose in mind. The group was open and honest. Although a cohesive confidentiality was maintained, identification was not an issue. The children felt free about being "divorce kids." Parents reported easier communication with the children. Teachers, parents, and the students themselves saw their grades improve, along with a decrease in behavior problems and an increase in social relationships.

Hammond (1979) "conducted a study of 165 elementary school children '. . . 82 from divorced families, 83 from intact families,' . . . in 'grades three through six'" (p. 56). The children were about 10 years of age and "the average length of time since the divorce was 5½ years" (p. 60). Their teachers were asked to answer questions regarding the students and whether there was a significant difference between the groups of

children in self-concept, academic achievement, problem behavior in school, self-reported happiness, liking for parents, perceived time and attention from parents, attitudes toward divorce, and self-disclosure to others. The second question was about attitudes they held regarding "the reconciliation of their parents, the negative effects of divorce for them, the positive effects of divorce for them, ways the school counselor could be helpful to them, and their liking for stepparents" (p. 56).

Teachers were also asked to report on reading and mathematics achievement scores. Several other instruments were used: Walker Problem Behavior Identification Checklist, Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, Attitude Toward Family Questionnaire, and Hammond Children of Divorce Questionnaire. The socioeconomic level of the sample was from lower-middle to middle class and the setting was a suburban community. The results showed that boys of divorce suffer more than girls. They had lower mathematics achievement and reported less happiness. (This sex difference had been supported in other studies: Pope and Mueller, 1979 and Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980.) "The positive effects of divorce were reported as 'parents not fighting as much anymore' and 'more presents from parents.' Negative effects were 'not having as much money and not seeing one parent as often anymore.' More than 86% of the children of divorce reported that school personnel could be helpful 'by asking children to talk about how they feel' and 'by giving children books to read

about divorce.' More than 75% suggested it would be helpful if counselors would talk to parents if the children would ask them to" (p. 60). Academic and behavior problems did not show as significant differences from intact families.

Of interest is the eventual academic and behavioral adjustments while still clearly wanting to deal with issues through talking and reading about divorce in school settings (at least during the latency age period). Wallerstein and Kelly also found this latency age as presenting a brave front of adjustment to the world while being aware of their true feeling states. Longfellow (1979) found that "44% of preschoolers showed deteriorated behavior in contrast to latency children showing 23 to 24%" (p. 304).

Freud describes the child's entrance into latency as the "cluster of symptoms disappears as if by magic as soon as the child takes the first step into the latency period, that is, as an immediate reaction to the biologically determined lessening of drive activity . . . . The latency child seems definitely less beset by problems" (p. 163). Of course, psychoanalytic theory subscribes to the disappearance of healthy rationality when the reworking of unresolved material resurfaces in adolescence. Hammond's study clearly substantiates the usefulness of school programs for children of divorce, even when all seems to be going well.

Braun and Sang (1976) agreed that any child in stress needs to feel protected and taken care of whether from a fall

in the playground or a divorce. They wrote that the "hug and I love you" from the teacher can help (p. 29). Warren (1976) stated, "When a child feels a lack of ability for whatever reason he will try to maintain that poor image, too. In order to counteract that, gently manipulate activities that can bring about improvement in the child's concept of self" (p. 17). Kramer (1980) advised "When self-esteem is abysmally low, competition does not act as a stimulus; it leads to despair" (p. 17). Salant (1980) used art as a means of helping a youngster gain a grasp of his feelings, "a way to work out fears, frustrations" (p. 23). Schoyer (1980) reviewed the stresses of divorce in preschoolers and the role of the teacher. Sonnenshein-Schneider and Baird (1980) wrote of a peer supportive counseling program using books, drawings, puppets, rehearsal, and roleplaying.

According to Wallerstein and Kelly, schools were found to be helpful in offering a structural continuity and refuge but much less teacher support than expected. Partly, lack of knowledge was the culprit. In some cases, teachers were not even aware that there was a divorce. Children did not always show the same stressful behavior. Some behaved as models in school but were upset at home. Others reversed the process. Again, mothers and teachers seemed to favor girls, treated them with more consideration; boys fared worse. Preschool children showed a high reliance on teachers. Teachers expressed a need for parents to be involved, as they were unable to sustain the

children's positive mood changes. They expressed a wish for the parents to be aware of their children's vulnerabilities.

When children acted out in relation to their peer group through moodiness, aggression, or withdrawal, teachers were reported to have set rules or they reminded them of acceptable behavior rather than intervening in a way which might facilitate children and peers to understand what they were experiencing and to promote insight into those feelings. This could also elicit peer support. Thus, findings were that when it came to children of divorce and peer-child relations, few teachers seemed helpful in this regard.

The authors of the school studies pointed out the need for both school-based programs and for teachers to assist the children through understanding the turmoil that they were experiencing. A number of classroom suggestions were offered as well as major questions that most children of divorce want concrete answers to, along with some of the typical fears and concerns that they harbor.

Working with teachers does seem warranted. Their relationship to the children can be stable and helpful. They are able to maintain involvement with parents and children. Programs can coordinate the home and school focus through teachers.

Description of Selected Solutions

There have been a number of successful approaches which have contributed to mitigating the impact of divorce on parents

and children. The mediation alternative promotes a cooperative relationship between the parents. Necessary issues are decided through this format.

The review of the literature made it clear that parents who are able to maintain an amicable interaction with each other are aiding their children in being able to adjust to their new life changes. This is an important factor and many parents are not aware of its significance.

Divorce therapy has many merits. It clarifies the stages of grief and shared feelings of commonality found in going from marriage to separation, from the decision to part through the aftermath, until the time when balance and autonomy are reached. It offers a view of divorce from the perspective of the child and in some instances includes information about child development. Ways to help children and oneself are explored. Strategies are learned. In group settings, another positive feature is the sharing of similar feelings and forming a social network.

School settings and teachers can offer support to children and their parents. It was observed that teachers can offer a consistent, stable environment at a time when children are experiencing so many changes that they do not know if or where they can feel protected and safe. There is a lack of educational programs designed to help all the participants of divorce reduce its impact on children, that is, including parents, children, and teachers of early childhood.

The solution selected by the writer was to attempt to integrate the important features found in the literature that would be particularly beneficial. There were separate monthly meetings addressing concerns of parents, children, and teachers.

The parents were exposed to an educational program about child development and the concerns children of divorce have. The parents were sensitized to the importance of their role, and the ways in which they can contribute to their children's development were discussed. Hopefully, a side benefit was the formation of a social network by the parents.

The children were looking for answers to concrete questions. In addition, depending on their level of development, they were harboring conceptions and misconceptions, fears and fantasies. Sharing these with others who were experiencing similar feelings brought relief. They liked to hear stories, draw, and engage in roleplaying and games which, when divorce related, were helpful in working through these feelings.

The teachers were helpful to the children and when given information and strategies they could use within the classroom setting, their effectiveness was increased in reducing the children's vulnerability and acting-out behaviors.

The last component, assessment, was necessary to determine needs and to objectively evaluate the success of the interventions.

Report of Action Taken

Establishing the program began with the acceptance by the Center directors and staff. Once this was accomplished, a letter (see Appendix G) was printed and mailed to the six participating communities. Returns were sent to the Center office. A significant mailing response did not initially occur for the program, and meetings followed in August and early September with the youth director and director of early childhood programs. At that time the lists of camp children were reviewed and discussed, after which the parents of children of divorce were contacted who it was felt would benefit from the program. The youth director and director of early childhood programs made the initial contacts.

The writer contacted each person who expressed interest in the program and made an initial appointment to meet at the Center. Meetings and conversations during the September period were held individually during which a short history was taken, consent for teacher and child involvement was obtained, parents were given the rating sheets, and the group was formed. Teachers and parents were given the rating scale. It was agreed that they should complete them and return them at the first group meeting or by mail. The first explanation of the program to the teachers occurred through the parents who had to give consent for the free flow of information. The next step was meeting with each of the teachers who were contacted by telephone and letter. It was expected that the teachers

would be at the Center but instead they were employed in public schools and in other day care centers. Evening meetings with the children were then arranged, not with teachers but with parents. Teacher meetings had to be scheduled after school.

The parent meetings were scheduled to last from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.; although they sometimes lasted until 9:30 or 10:00, this remained the basic plan. Teacher meetings were closer to an hour each time. Time with the children varied from an hour to an hour-and-a-half. Originally it was thought that the youngest children would have shorter meetings and smaller groups. Age matching was also an expectation. However, since the parents brought the children and waited for them and five pairs of siblings were involved, this did not occur.

The writer remained the group coordinator and continuing facilitator by introducing the special activities and guest leaders. Any missed homework assignments or time with members of any of the three groups was handled through direct contact initiated by the writer. This did present a need for extra time spent on preparation and individual follow-ups. In order to keep abreast of the issues which were presented, additional library visits were also needed to find materials.

The format of all the meetings was educational. The parent meetings involved imparting of information and facilitating the sharing of ideas. The children's meetings used books, films, drawing, roleplaying, music, discussion, and games. The teacher meetings were a combination of shared

consultations; sometimes ventilation of identified concerns; helping others talk about divorce and reactions children have (these children in particular); and seeking strategies to try in order to remediate the effects.

Confidentiality and consent issues were addressed with all participants. The group rules which were established included: (a) one person talks at a time; (b) listen to the person and try to understand the feelings behind the words; (c) be truthful and sincere; (d) accept the other people in the group; (e) one does not have to agree with what the others say or do, but no one may "put down" another person; (f) attempts should be made to be at all meetings; (g) share with the group but allow others their time; and (h) feel free to speak or not speak as one feels.

By the end of August through September, preliminaries were achieved. They were: the Center permission to implement; acquisition of the behavior rating scale, books, filmstrips, films, and games; parent letters were distributed through the brochure; program meetings were held with staff; and telephone calls were made. Telephone contact, arrangements with guest speakers, and planning and meeting with speakers occurred within this same period prior to implementation.

The writer was responsible for obtaining the materials. The Center supplied the meeting rooms except for a farewell last meeting. A calendar outline follows this narrative section and provides a simplified method to visualize the actual schedule.

Parent interviews took place after the middle of September. At that time, the parents completed the Burks' Behavioral Rating Scales. The teacher meetings took place through the end of September and the beginning of October. The teachers completed the Burks' Behavior Rating Scales. The writer met with each of the children. The Behavioral Rating Scales were scored when they were received from the parents and teachers. The writer profiled the results in order to plan information regarding the findings for incorporation into the educational program.

The first group meeting in October was an introductory one. A long table was arranged with colored binders, lined notebook paper, pencils, index cards, and "hello" sticker nametags. As participants arrived they were greeted and asked to fill out their tags and put them on. They were asked to put their names on the cards, what they hoped to get out of the workshops, and what they saw as their most pressing issues.

The group then gathered in a three-sided square of couches and chairs facing each other and an easel. The discussion established the ground rules and they were written on the easel with a marker. Each person then introduced himself/herself and told something about who they were, what they did, names and ages of their children, marital state at that time, interests or concerns, and why they were there. The feeling of sharing with one another was immediately established and interactive listening occurred. A short

roleplay was done of listening and reflecting back. Groups of two were formed for three-minute turns for sharing problems and it was asked that each person hear the other's concerns. They were instructed not to give advice but to listen and to promote expression.

The large group then reassembled and shared feelings by going around the room and discussing each of the smaller group's most pressing concerns or feelings from what had just been heard. These were listed on the easel and common threads were found. The factor of time did emerge.

The most stressed individuals were in a separation process while those who had been divorced for a longer period of time were less openly agitated by their problems. This factor was brought out, and the now "experienced ones" were asked to recall for the others how they had been in the initial days. The fact that time does seem to settle or relax one was clearly evident. It was not that everything gets solved or becomes perfect, but that more of a calmness does set in. Letting go of the marriage involves giving up of the represented, expected, or idealized "best friend;" and then the problem of what to do with the disappointment and loneliness was mentioned.

A pattern was described which is very similar to the grieving process. Friends, social life, and elements of change over and above the spousal relationship were mentioned. In-laws took sides and parents were back in their lives once

again voicing their feelings and ideas with freedom, treating them as if they had become children once again. Once these common issues were summarized, group members were asked to choose a different partner and again take turns each speaking to the other, sharing something about their children, listening, and talking.

Once again, the large group reassembled and members spoke about how effective it was to share this way. After some discussion where a positive reaction was expressed, the evening was reviewed, a projected calendar was established, and it was agreed that participants would be in touch by telephone with each other. A meeting for the children was arranged for part of the group on one day and part on another day. The social worker was present as a facilitator and was very helpful in demonstrating how to reflect one's feelings, give "I-messages," and express oneself in a nondirective manner. She made it easier to roleplay by example.

The children were also involved in introductory activities. They filled out nametags and a nursery school room was used for drawing and other activities. (As it turned out, the two groups of children knew each other well from camp and also from other previous nursery schools. One group had six children aware of each other from day care as well.) Markers, crayons, and paper were on tables in the room and the children were asked to draw a favorite animal and to name or draw a favorite activity and favorite snack. These were shared and

the group laughed and commiserated on common likes that were found. While they were drawing, the Structured Questionnaire was filled out with the writer's help.

When things were put away, stretching was done and some of the equipment was used: the slide, a tunnel, some large blocks, and a two-seater rocker; then "follow the leader" was played. The children then sat in a circle, talked again about shared things in their drawings, and then about the fact that they also shared having a parent not living in the house. It was explained that everyone there had parents who were divorced or separated. This was new to the children but they did not openly react to it. The meeting closed with reading Adams (1973) Mushy Eggs. At the end of both meetings, the children sang the song, "I Am Glad We Got Together." They expressed having a nice time and wanting to see each other separately and together. There was a reestablishment of friendships.

At the teacher meeting, the results of the Behavior Rating Scale were discussed. Feelings about divorce and thoughts about children of divorce were shared and explored. A few myths were discussed and questioned regarding inevitable outcomes or lack of them; mainly stereotypes were looked at for false elements. Classroom behavioral concerns were expressed, not necessarily divorce related. Frustrations involved in teaching were readily shared. Focus on the children and how to help them in school was emphasized as a goal to work on together.

The November parent meeting involved a review of the last session regarding feelings which are common to parents and children of divorce. The discussion centered around being aware of one's thoughts, how one communicates with others, and how one observes and listens. The facilitators did a short role play using body language and verbal communicators which showed happiness, anger, and mixed messages where one thing was said but physical posture and facial expressions displayed conflicting messages.

Subjects discussed included homework assignments, things that were done or said, perhaps learned, that participants had not been aware of. They then broke up into groups of two to share a situation that each had had with his/her children, being aware of the manner used in listening or not listening and having other ways to respond. Directions given were to really try to become an observer of the process, not to focus only on the content. At the end of about 7 minutes, partners exchanges roles to complete the task by 15 minutes. Then the group came together and shared the experience. They were asked how it felt, whether they were aware of body position, facial expression, and tone of voice for themselves and their partner.

Discussion concerned how frequently one assumes to know what the other person is thinking and feeling, too quickly saying, "I know exactly how you feel." Though one might be quite sensitive, it should not be assumed that these perceptions are accurate. One should check it out by saying, "When you said

such and so . . ., I thought you meant . . . . Is that right?" Or one should ask for more information such as, "I am not sure what you were saying when . . . ." "Do you feel that . . . .?" "Do you mean . . . .?"

The focus then went to practicing awareness of children's messages, particularly about divorce and separation. For this exercise, the groups were formed into threes. They were asked to think of situations when the children felt sad, angry, happy, lonely, hurt. They were encouraged to think of what they said, how they looked, what they did to express their feelings. Questions asked were: "What did you say?" "How did they respond?" "What was your body doing?" "Did you face your child directly and maintain eye contact?" "Did you touch or hold your child?" "How could you have listened or responded differently?" "How could you have reacted so that you felt better in that situation?"

Sometimes one's own feelings may make listening very difficult. For example, if a child states: "I want you to be with Daddy . . . be together. I don't want to live here. It is all your fault." Then the child looks down, makes no eye contact, walks out, and slams the door. First, just to ventilate, the group was asked to show not what <u>they</u> would say, but what an angry, guilt-ridden person could have said. It was pointed out how adults and children do see things differently and how children react in ways which are not comparable to grown-ups. Responsive ideas were shared, using this example,

that could promote permission to share feelings, to know that they would be accepted without judgment. For example, "Sometimes we don't have the necessary energy or patience, then we can be open and honest about that, too." "I appreciate that you are telling me how you feel. I understand how hard things are for you sometimes. I am just so tired right now, can we talk about this after dinner?" The main points covered were giving permission for expression of feelings. A crucial message was that limits and consistency can be quite positive for children and they do not negate building and sharing communications, encouraging a trusting and caring environment, and enhancing self-worth in each individual.

A homework assignment was given for each person to write four things they did that made them feel good about themselves during the time between meetings and four opposite feelings that they had experienced in the past, growing up, or in their marriages when they wanted to feel better but did not because of a putdown or lack of appreciation felt in the situation. Discussion concerned the written recommendations which each received as a result of their answers on the rating scales. For examples of suggestions, see Appendix H.

The children's meeting was designed to promote friendships and to further the awareness that divorce or separation was a common influence in their lives. Initially, a circle game was played with a large ball. A player said, "I am _____ and I am throwing the ball to _____." After everyone had a turn,

the dialogue changed to, "I live with _____" (custodial parent and others). Then, "After school, I go to _____." The children came together at the tables and summarized their different living styles with mother, dad, grandparents, or others. A short discussion concerned divorce and changes. Then the children drew a "wished-to-be" animal. Participants shared pictures, talked about their choices, and reviewed taking turns and listening to each other. They also drew some turkey and Thanksgiving pictures while discussing how holidays are sometimes difficult because they are most aware of other families sharing dinners together. Most of the children saw one or the other parent at one time. One 3½-year-old said, "My daddy eats with Mommy, C_____(Mommy's boyfriend), and everybody." One 4-year-old said, "We don't have a daddy." Her sister angrily said to her, "We do, too" then turned to the group and said, "We never see him." An 8-year-old said, "I never see him." Then the children talked about how they sometimes believe that they are somehow to blame when parents do not stay together, but that it is not true. Grownups have their own problems.

The writer went to the easel and drew a large triangle. At one angle, a lady stick figure was drawn with the word "mother;" a man stick figure and word "daddy" at the second angle; boy and girl stick figures with the word "child" under each were drawn at the third angle. Then arrows were drawn going back and forth between mother and daddy, mother and child,

daddy and child. Each side was in a different color to illustrate the separate and different relationships. Then the children cleaned up their things and took home their drawings.

The meeting with the teachers focused on communication. In order to be understood, one needs to send clear messages and the listener has to be able to receive the messages accurately. If one is being congruent or consistent in what is being shared, then it is easier. If a person is seen gritting his/her teeth, looking miserable, and saying, "I am so happy to see you," one is aware that this is a mixed or confusing message.

Being effective involves taking a risk by exposing one's true self as sender. Listening actively and feeding back what one thinks the person meant also means one has to be open and expose himself/herself. Relationships which are effective involve trust and courage. In a helping relationship, teachers are facilitators of growth. Particularly for the early childhood age group, the teacher represents a consistent, dependable person--someone to trust. For those from separation or divorce, this relationship can be a haven when compared to home upheaval and turmoil.

Groups of two were formed with directions to share a frustrating incident at school or at home. One partner was to send a message, the other was to listen and feed back the feelings and story heard. A total of 15 minutes was spent on this task. Teachers asked questions and checked impressions as receivers.

One group then reassembled and shared feelings: "Did you feel threatened, comfortable, support, or what?" One of the goals was to further communication and to be nonjudgmental. Recognizing statements that counteract the aims were practiced. For example, two children are fighting over who is going to paint. "Stop that fighting right now. Neigher one of you can paint just for that." What else could have been said instead?

Turns were taken roleplaying children's comments that sometimes leave one floundering regarding what to say back, such as, "My father said my mother is stupid." "My mother says we don't have money anymore." Practice in listening was done through this. Discussion was held concerning sending "I" messages instead of "you" messages. Examples used were of a class clown, a child knocking down blocks, and a child not putting toys or even personal belongings away. What can be said and how can things be phrased to avoid being negative or closing off communication? How can thoughtfulness and insight, or at least openness, be promoted and salvage the child's self-esteem?

The teachers were given a homework assignment to write down four situations and messages handled in hurtful ways that they knew of, had seen, or experienced. Then they were asked to give examples of how to change them into congruent or acceptable "I" messages or positive statements. They were to be brought to the next meeting for sharing.

At the close of the meeting, the written recommendations were discussed which were received as a result of their answers on the rating scales (see Appendix O). The writer answered questions regarding these recommendations.

The December parents' meeting began with a sharing of homework assignments. The responses indicated that one effect was a recognition that parents were able to be in control as observers, listeners, and senders of messages. They did not have to repeat habits which were no longer helpful to them. They did not have to feel in a defensive posture or "training" position at all times. A sense of honest communication with their children, each other, and others with whom they tried to apply this concept appeared to have brought about feelings which they expressed as "It felt nice . . . I felt honest . . . It was easy and good."

On an easel prepared by the facilitator were the words that indicated feelings that parents and children often feel about divorce: guilt, anger, panic, anxiety, bitterness, rejection, blame (others/self), ambivalence, frustration, fear, sadness, partial relief, loneliness, failure, acceptance, pain. These feelings were reviewed and the following statement was formulated: "It has been said that divorce or separation is much like death in that one goes through stages which are broadly: the initial stage, a transition, and the final stage." The list of feelings was used and divided into 1, 2, or 3 for the times they were or were not experienced. When this was

completed, it was recognized that feelings do not necessarily disappear. For some of the words, all three numbers had to be given. It became clear that still the degree or intensity of pain did vary with the stages. Participants shared their early stages and also spoke about the late-night loneliness they continued to experience. Five people in particular mentioned that around 10:30 or later when all is finally quiet, it was then that they missed a human contact to just unwind with or share, as is done at these meetings. At that point, parents were asked about how late they are up at night and what might help. The five who were most affected by this "late-night loneliness" state of pain agreed to share their phone numbers and try at least one late contact between meetings in order to feel that there is a live human being out there for them that they did not want anything from except a sense of "I am here, I will listen."

The list of feelings was again reviewed from the point of view of children at different ages. The parents were informed that children often experience guilt and think that something they thought, did, or did not do might have caused the problem. Children still believe in magic: "If I think it, it can happen." They also view themselves as the center of everything; they do not have the same perspective of the world that adults do. "If only I had kept my room clean, s/he would have stayed." "If s/he loved me enough (translated, if I were lovable enough), this would not have happened."

Anger and bitterness might be appropriate from some points of view but if children and nurturance for their future are considered, several things ought to be conveyed to them. "It is fine to express anger verbally . . . tell me about it." However, the sending message is "We (Mom and Dad) do not get along anymore. We are each trying for happiness. It is not your fault. It was not because of you. We had problems together and need to live apart." The child should not feel brought into this world by a bad person. That will not foster confidence or a decent self-esteem. Negative feelings, fear of abandonment by the custodial parent, and a sense of tremendous loss and confusion will occur. There will be times when the child is so overwhelmed that denial and/or fantasies are held to instead of facts. It is true that in a sense while the parent feels at the lowest point, s/he needs to give to the child in a way that saps energy s/he is not sure is available. Fear of having children bring up their feelings is not unusual, but they need to be brought up. It is very similar to having an infection--if it is cleaned out by being exposed to the surface, it will heal easier and quicker. If it is left buried, it might get worse and spread into other areas. Now that parents have been learning how to listen, be sensitive to children's expressions; read them. "However, don't be like the old story of pushing more than they are ready for, such as the child who asked 'Where do I come from?' and being told all the facts of life. Then the child said, 'Oh, I wondered because

Sarah comes from Chicago!'" Do expect to be asked the same questions over and over again. It is difficult for a child to be supportive of the expression of feelings and to continue to practice and use nonjudgmental listening skills.

At this December meeting, holiday time was looming large. The issues were discussed concerning the celebration of the holidays and how the commercial aspect and the portrayal of family sharing complicate this time for almost everyone. Discussion centered on this and alternatives were shared of how this holiday season could be spent. One solution on the basis of specific days was the activities the Center offers, knowing that so many homes involve working mothers. One trip would leave from the Center to see a local presentation of "The Nutcracker;" one would go to Radio City Music Hall; and one would be to go roller skating in a group. Many day activities and watching of children would be available. Alternatives for holiday dinners were shared. Discussion concerned modeling some fun and happiness, focusing on the positives that are present in the participants' lives.

Unexpectedly, as discussion turned to setting limits for children and not overindulging them and being consistent, it emerged that punishment and/or abuse were issues in need of consideration. Within the group, it was mentioned that one person had been hospitalized after being beaten by her father and another had been raised by a father with the use of the belt as a method of discipline and was repeating this with his

children. Two of the mothers had been abused by their former husbands; two of the mothers were presently using "belts" on their sons; and one child had been beaten by the now separated-from father.

The writer then stated: "I am basically a pacifist and am totally opposed to hitting children. As we now know, there are many ways to communicate and deal with anger; we do not have to and cannot act out in an agressive manner on our children. We have to learn other ways to express our feelings harmlessly and to gain control over ourselves in times of lack of control. For anyone exposed to violence as a method of discipline, it will not be easy. However, anyone in this group has to try to the utmost to follow this; it will not be easy. Physical violence is not acceptable. If you are very upset, call someone in order to cool off. Take a walk. Try to contact one of us, another friend, or Parents Anonymous, whomever. If this cannot be done, call here so that we will be able to discuss places and people where you will be helped with this. There are always alternatives."

Group members then worked together on talking about and understanding Erickson's (1963) first three growth stages. This involved a lot of myth breaking and illustrated children's stages and needs from this point of view. It became evident that a child cannot be "spoiled" in the first six months by being loved and held. A sense of the child as someone to give to, rather than expecting to receive from, appeared new to some,

where previously the attitude was one of the reverse of this. Also, an implied belief for some was that children are tricky or manipulative. Another issue discussed was the confusing aspect of a child believing that the parent was omnipotent. This clarified the anger when a child experienced being told "no." This concept was carried further into how that applied to believing that parents could do and have anything that they wanted. This was then brought back to the "Santa Claus" fantasy and the upcoming holiday. The meeting ended by members deciding that caring, feeling, and nurturing were the most important gifts that could be given to children--not things.

The book Explaining Divorce to Children (Grollman, 1969) was offered to the parents to borrow, as several paperback copies had been obtained for them.

The children's meeting involved first meeting in a circle and talking about the upcoming holiday, their plans, and expectations. Discussion concerned how sometimes people feel happy and also sad during these times. Some of the children spoke of visiting grandparents or the "other" parent during their vacation. One was concerned a bit about his dad's new girlfriend. Two sisters expressed hatred of their mother's new boyfriend. Feelings were discussed and the children listened to one another and spoke about how natural it was to feel all these different things. The game "Talking, Feeling, Doing" was played for awhile but it was decided to leave time for other activities, too. The 7 and 8-year-olds helped the

younger children play the game, when needed. The writer helped with the reading. It was a sharing game, allowing expression and fun.

Then a large piece of newsprint was used to list on it "happiness is" things. The group members then talked about and listed the important people in their lives and what each does to make them feel happy. Every child named one thing they would do to make them happy. They drew a happy activity picture to take home. The children returned to the circle and were asked why they thought their parents were divorced or separated. One 7-year-old girl and one 8-year-old boy mentioned that their fathers were "not in love with their mothers;" another said "they didn't get along." A few children said "I don't know." There was a looking-down on the part of a few, seemingly embarassed by this topic.

The writer said, "I think some of you feel strange or uncomfortable about this and a lot of children do feel the way you do. Some children think they are to blame and they are not. Some people need to blame someone, but no one is to blame. Each person wants to be happy and sometimes we make mistakes. Your mom and dad thought they could be happy together and make each other happy and that just did not work out that way. They do not want to live together any more. It makes everyone unhappy but, just like 'Humpty Dumpty,' they decided they can't be put together again in marriage. It is very hard for you and many things change. This can make you very unhappy. There are

just some things we have no control over, but we can control what we do about what does happen. We can try to find the happy things like we did today. We can think of the people in our lives. Things do change--we are not little like a few years ago. We, too, will change and grow and need to enjoy today and try to think of the things we can do." The story "Talking to Children about Divorce" (Grollman, 1975) was read to the children and all sang "Frosty the Snowman" and wished each other "happy holidays."

The teachers' meeting started with a discussion of the homework and reactions to the communication exercises were shared. The feeling lists that had been prepared for the parents were reviewed including how the parents really were familiar with most entries on the list. The children's feelings were discussed, much as had been done with the parents. The teachers were then asked to go through the list themselves and number the feelings they were most aware of experiencing at times of distress. Certainly, everyone has changing moods; being aware and sensitive is a part of being alive. Discussion concerned the issues which have to be faced at holiday time, the fantasies and memories that may occur, and the unresolved feelings which surface at such times.

One of the concerns discussed was the seeming competition with presents, be they Christmas or Chanukah, just the desire for gifts. Playing down "things" and not fostering competition in the classroom was discussed. Suggestions were made to use

with children such as: "I like the colors you used in your picture." "You sure know how to hang your coat up neatly. I like that." Circle time can be used for having the children make a nice comment about each picture that a child in class makes and to foster the concept of liking one another.

The question of handling a teller of a tall tale without hurting him was brought up. It was shared that Warren (1976) suggested saying something like "That sure would be a dream come true" (p. 17). That is, we can be listeners and handle this in nonhurtful ways which can help the child. Grollman's book (1969) for parents was used and the writer read his story (1975) for children to the group. Members then shared some of the classroom happenings, their exhaustion at this time of year, and how they were looking forward to the coming time off.

The guest at the January meeting was a creative drama specialist. Members from all three groups were in attendance together, that is, parents, teachers, and children. The evening began with all members forming a large circle. The first activity was to pretend that all were ballet dancing, then climbing a ladder as beginning stretch exercises. One child was then asked to think of himself as tossing a very light balloon to someone of his choice, using their name to alert them. The others were to keep the balloon in the air without letting it drop to the ground if possible.

The next imaginary object was a very heavy one which members pushed, carried, passed, and strained mightily with to

bring to each other. After passing a few more pretend articles around the circle, members each became whatever kitchen objects the children chose. This procedure continued with the various rooms in the house, objects outdoors, and general free choices followed by everyone. When turns were completed, members sat down comfortably on the floor where they were and spoke about how they felt about their experiences. They did feel a sense of freedom, fun, and of being together and sharing. The leader pointed out that no equipment was needed for this. She suggested that this could be done readily by the teachers in school and suggested that parents and children could apply this at home and on visiting days during weekends and vacations. A side benefit was that it was more interactive than watching television.

After this, participants split up into groups with three primary members: one parent, teacher, and child not necessarily evenly divided. Each group was to take one piece of construction paper and tear it into three sections. They were to look at the results and choose one part to represent the beginning of a story or incident that would be shared with the groups, a second part as the middle of the story, and the last chosen piece as the end. In the first section, there was a problem presentation; in the middle, there was a sort of plot movement; and in the final section, there was the end or the problem solution. Furniture in the room was used for props, along with improvising sets with construction paper, staplers, and Scotch tape. Each presentation was completely different from the

others in theme and scope. It was very interesting to both spectators and participants. During the working process, one 5-year-old boy asked the group to represent a time at the beach when he remembered his whole family being "together, before we lost Mommy." His portrayed event was happy whereas most of the time in other situations, he evaded any personal references.

After watching each group's presentation followed by clapping, recognition, and enjoyment, the members reassembled and again discussed how easy this could be done and in so many different settings without any preparation needed. They shared refreshments, discussed what a lovely, exhilirating experience this had been for all present, and expressed appreciation to the evening's guest leader.

The February parents' meeting began by making a list of "games we won't play," as the results could be harmful to the children. A sample list was put on the easel prior to the beginning of the meeting. After discussing suggested "games," these examples were shared: put-downs, scapegoat, messenger, spy, substitute, and Santa Claus. Stories and feelings were shared.

Part of the group was aware of the reasonableness in modeling caring, supportive behavior. However, several members of the group talked about their anger and wanting their child to know "the truth." It was still difficult for them to understand or accept that children were not to be their confidants,

that they were children and must be allowed to be and to develop an identification and awareness of both parents.

The film "Breakup" was shown which had a positive effect on separating and clarifying the different perspectives involved. The writer questioned specific spots in the film as to what each character might be experiencing in the segment: mother, daughter or father, son.

A preparation discussion for the homework assignment was held which focused on weekend activities. Naturalness on visiting days and during regular hometime was discussed--not always doing something special.

It appeared that several members of the group were socializing with each other between meetings, particularly on weekends. Five of the parents did not have regular visitation times. No one in the group had a situation of stepchildren coming into their home or one of going into a home with stepsiblings present, so that weekend family rules and issues common to reconstituted families did not emerge.

The emphasis remained on how a loving relationship with both parents had been helpful to children. This could be promoted when an agreement was made to abide by the rule of parents speaking respectfully about and to each other, taking responsibility for their own actions, and trying to work together on child rearing. When there were unresolved differences, these were to be acknowledged and a decision made to explain this to the children in a benign fashion such as, "Well, I believe this

and in my house you will follow this rule. When you are visiting Dad, he is in charge." This approach was extended into appropriate social graces; for example. when one visits at a friend's house, s/he follows their house rules and respects boundaries.

A "feeling wheel" was made together and participants spoke of feeling opposites and how this could be used for sharing and talking with children. Several children's books about divorce were perused and they were left on the table, available for borrowing. LeShan's (1984) book was shared.

The children's meeting began by watching the film "Breakup" and continued with discussions about awareness and expression of feelings. Goldstein's (1985) activities 11, 12, and 13 and the writer's activity 4 (Holman & others, 1985) were used with the intent of encouraging fluency, understanding how moods affect behavior, and how some color references are used to signify different feeling states. (pp. 4, 10, 11, 12)

The initial introduction to this activity was made with the drawing of a door. The children were asked, "What would you like for there to be behind the door?" and "What don't you want to find behind the door?" Answers ranged from monsters to wished-for things. The group then talked about sad and happy faces, feeling "blue," and being in a "rosy" mood. A drawing time was held to draw what might be behind the door; to draw faces with smiles, frowns, anger, or surprise; and colors were used to aid in expressing these feelings.

A music movement time was held during which group members marched, skipped, and moved lightly to soft music, more fiercely

to loud. Participants re-formed into a circle with their chairs and shared their drawings.

The teachers viewed the film "Breakup." They expressed their observations and reactions to each member of the family throughout the film. The activities that the children had experienced were shared. They also drew mood pictures, used colors, and made faces.

The teachers then cut out two large circles. They drew a series of mood pictures, going around one of the circles, and colored them in. They took the second circle and cut out a tachistoscope-type window, used a brad and connected the two circles, forming a feeling wheel to be used in the classroom. They shared how familiar stories such as Cinderella and The Three Bears could be used to stimulate feeling discussions. For instance, "How do you think Cinderella felt when her step-sister told her she could not go to the ball?"

Books on divorce and Grandparents--A Special Kind of Love were left on the table for sharing and borrowing. (LeShan, 1984).

The March parent and teacher meetings started with the writer saying, "It didn't turn out the way I expected. Now let's not take energy and waste it on the past or on future worry. This is my now family and situation. How do we build self-esteem? Whom do you need to trust?"

A short discussion followed. Participants then did an exercise entitled, "What I would like to hear about myself and two to three people I would like to hear it from." Then each

made a list of positive and negative adjectives that they might apply to themselves. Members split into groups of two to share the lists. Instructions were given to: "listen and accept the other person's feelings; switch listening positions, then say two positive things about each other." Then participants went to the tables and wrote two affirmation statements about themselves.

The writer spoke about building self-esteem through positive statements which convey "I see you as capable . . . I like when you do such-and-so." Members were cautioned to be careful to separate acts or behavior from the person. They should send the message "You are important and lovable to me just because you are you. That is a given, not a to-be-earned message." When one has to give a negative statement, s/he should be careful not to be destructive. State "Do not do that because . . . . Do this instead." For an example, they were told, "Becky was pulling the dog's tail, chasing him around the room. Tell Becky, 'Don't do that as the dog might snap at you. Pet him gently and don't chase him if he wants to get away from you. I don't like him to be unhappy and I don't want you to hurt him or possibly get hurt yourself.'" In other words, try to be protective and structured as a parent. Do not negate or ridicule. Children should want to do and want to be through a feeling of confidence.

Esteem statements from Clarke (1978):

Birth to 6 months: I am glad you came to be with us.

Good morning!

Oh, so you are hungry again? OK!

You're wet--I'll change your diapers now.

Ignore them, Sean. You'll sit up when <u>you</u> are ready.

Six to 18 months: You don't have to do tricks (be smart, cute, stupid, sick, happy, tough, fragile, busy) to get strokes. It's okay to do things (try things, initiate, be curious, be intuitive) and get support and protection at the same time.

Why, Brent, where are you going with that big bucket of water? Let me take you and the water outdoors. You're washing rocks? Makes them wet, doesn't it?

Eighteen months to 3 years: Wow, you are getting bigger. You need new shoes (I'm glad you are growing up).

It's okay to feel angry but I won't let you hurt Mike. (I'm not afraid of your anger.) Clear, gentle discipline is appropriate at this age.

Three years to 6 years: Children are trying to find out who they are. Separate fantasy from reality. Give children of this age straight answers. Children do need to challenge rules to learn their boundaries.

Ages 6 to 8 years: This age is learning to do on their own. "I am glad to hear your opinion." "It is okay if we disagree."

Discussion concerned how important it was to avoid making discounting statements. When a child expresses a feeling, accept

it, ask open questions, explore, support. Members' own myths were then explored by developing lists together: A good mother is . . . . A good father is . . . . A good teacher is . . . . A good child at age (infant, toddler, 3-6, 6-8) is . . . . Past myths were then discussed and the lists were revised (Clarke, 1978, pp. 24, 25, 110, 111, 117, 120, 121, 167, 170, 171, 235, 256). The interaction handout from Clarke (1980) was used in partners:

1. Mill around then ignore each other.
2. Say some greeting, looking away.
3. Say some greeting with eye contact. Do not touch.
4. Touch arm, look in the eyes, smile, and say, "I'm glad you are in this class!"
5. Hug.
6. Give a cold, icy stare.
7. Say something irritable, "I can't hear you. Speak up!"
8. Put the palms of your hands against the hands of your partner. Push each other violently while repeating your irritable message.

Participants rank ordered--1: liked best; 8: liked least. They did and felt: good, sad, mad, confused, lonely, happy, irritated, scared. "1: I give most often; 8: I give least often" (Clarke, 1980, p. 83).

They reviewed the Clemes and Bean (1981) conditions of self-esteem: "a sense of connectiveness; a sense of uniqueness; a sense of power; a sense of models." (p. 12) Both meetings ended

by members agreeing that all need to foster esteem, including their own self-esteem.

The children's meeting began with a review of the faces that were drawn at the last meeting. A list was made of the feelings and faces as described by Jewett (1982): "sad, mad, glad, happy, scared, lonely." (p. 56) A few more words were added: ashamed, powerless, silly. Each of the feelings was reviewed: "When you think about being with your father or mother, which of these do you feel? Raise your hand. Who can show us in body and face how it feels?" Then the children drew faces and cut them out. They put them in a pile and took turns with the card picking. They played by telling a story of a time when they felt like the card or made up a story of what could have made that feeling come.

The children played a card game of "Go Fish" to get matched faces and a game of "Concentration" trying to match faces. The rules were not too strict but the children were able to draw, match, talk, and feel free regarding the activity. They then practiced making faces of their own to go with the card faces. They got out blocks and did a game of "unfair." They each had a turn doing: "It is unfair when . . . . " After each child had three to four unfair blocks built on the floor, s/he was allowed to knock them down, being careful that no one was in the way.

They got a pile of newspapers and each stuffed a brown paper bag (with help). They again pretended to be packing away some

sad, angry, lonely feelings; and they decorated the bags and agreed to choose whether to keep them at home or to throw them away. They drew a picture of someone with whom they sometimes felt angry and tore that up and threw it away. They then got in a circle on the floor and reviewed how it was okay to feel most anything and that they could find acceptable ways to get these feelings out without hurting anyone.

The children got out blue and white construction paper and together made clouds with problems and solutions for a sky full of ideas. They cleaned up, got together on the floor in a circle again, and the writer spoke of how they had a lot of power to work things out even when they felt sad or were in pain. The group was thanked for sharing and doing so much good work at this meeting.

The April meetings for both parents and teachers dealt with first viewing the filmstrip "My Parents are Getting a Divorce." Members discussed particulars that each group felt applied to them and particularly to the children. They then discussed separation as a developmental task. It was mentioned that around the third quarter of the first year of life, babies are attached to their caretaker or primary parenting figures. When that person(s) leaves, the baby fears that that individual is lost forever. S/he does not yet conceptually know that existence can occur out of sight. Object permanence has not been established. This is really part of why the game of peek-a-boo, hiding and finding play, dropping and coming back are delightfully

practiced as the young child gains mastery over fears. Even when children have found ways to cope in their early stages, the prototype for fear of separation is a natural part of growing. For some children, sleep is a difficult separation time.

At older ages, remnants of this are seen when a substitute teacher takes a class in school. The children feel separated from their familiar teacher who is unexpectedly replaced; and they become out of sorts, misbehaving, throwing paper, saying "Oh, we have done that work before," as if they were punishing the substitute for the teacher's absence. This is based on the children's remaining need to be reassured, to find the adults in their lives to be dependable so they can begin to work towards finding their own autonomy, their boundaries, their independent selves. When, instead, divorce or separation come into the picture, their own worlds are shattered and old, anxious feelings of being lost or abandoned reemerge.

At the parent meeting, this topic was continued focusing on how the separation that occurs in the marriage might well bring up old fears from one's own childhood that add to the atmosphere for the children. Being open to sharing these feelings was discussed, trying to give shape so that the children could be helped with them.

Some mixed feelings regarding partners were expressed. In a way, two people in particular expressed the feeling that if their former mates would stay out of their lives it would be

easier. The writer then spoke about there being advantages for children to know both parents. Made-up fantasies could be quite negative, more so than the truth. No one is totally bad; and some contact, when feasible, could alleviate the fears that the noncustodial parent is loaded with and could pass down inescapable, genetically inherited traits.

The absent parent could bring forth regret feelings in the child. Criticism of the other parent was not recommended. It is best for children to have openness and availability of both people when it is possible. Again, discussion concerned what to do when the other parent really has problems. It was concluded that children could be told that, not in a judging way, there are issues which are interferring with that individual's ability to "be with you or play with you." The parent should be clear that the child is not at fault. The section of the Rowland (1980) book "Reactions When a Parent Leaves" (pp. 42-44) was reviewed (see Appendix I).

Members talked about not substituting money and possessions for communication and affection. Aside from anything else, it does not work. Ways to share with one's child should be found. Be natural by playing games, cooking, doing things together that are enjoyable. It makes the time easier and pleasant.

The picture of a child being pulled between two parents was brought up again and it was likened to being in a tug-of-war. Instead, parents should be aiming for continuity through the noncustodial parent and child sending on-going postcards,

pictures of activities together and apart, setting telephone contact times for parent and child, planning scrapbooks of "I did this last week," with mementos, drawings, and sentences. Another way of minimizing the separation is to plan to watch a show on television while apart; then after, it can be discussed or shared by telephone or at the next visit.

Both parents have to be flexible and understanding of times when the children might want to remain at home for an event or want to be with or bring friends. Also, there will be times of problem behavior and one should expect this without assuming that all is automatically related to divorce. Problems and challenge also come with growth.

Both the parent and teacher groups discussed the children's aggressive, pushy behavior and wanting candy, toys, and attention. It is necessary for all to accept that they are sometimes coping with emotions that they are too young to handle. They then feel helpless, powerless, abandoned. One has to expect days of stress but reassurance and talking lessens the impact. Routines and consistency are helpful to all young children. Arrangements should be kept simple and timely.

Participants also talked about transition times--moments of going and coming--that seemed emotionally loaded, less casual than before. It was mentioned that there were only two more months remaining for the on-going meetings. This stimulated a bit of awareness of how they also could cope with such happenings and changes. They then did some role playing of goodbye scenes

they recalled from other settings such as airports, leaving for camp, and going away to school and made contact with that anxious moment or task till the parting was completed.

The children's meeting began by reviewing the Guidance Associates (1973) book. The children then spoke about visits to people, friends, relatives, the process of coming and going, packing a suitcase, and planning a trip. They listened to the music "So Early in the Morning" and took turns being the leader, deciding on what to do and on what day. Then they went to the tables and talked and drew about what things were better now and what things seemed worse. They were making a booklet for a fictional boy named "Jimmy" to let him know about this type of change. They then used some magazines, markers, scraps, straws, foil, and string and made collages for a picture to present to the person of their choice. When finished, they went back in the circle and spoke about changes in themselves such as being taller, heavier, or better at some things such as running or listening that indicated that growing was happening. They also spoke about having two more meetings and that the last meeting would be a dinner with everyone together.

The May children's meeting began with a discussion of variations such as the weather, school ending, and summer plans. The awareness of moving on, time passing, and a sense of closure were a part of this. The older group of children was particularly expressive. The younger group members were more here-and-now oriented. As the weather had been extremely variable (not at all

like most May-type days), the children mentioned the cold days, warm days, rain, and sun and used this as an example related to change. They knew that they were heading towards warmth and summer but still they went back and forth, not at all in a seemingly clear direction. On some days, it was hard to tell where they were heading, yet they knew the direction was definite and could be counted on. They were sure that certain plans could be made and would be as expected.

The children then shared the changes that had occurred since the initial separation or divorce. On a large easel, they developed a list of changes which included: living arrangements, moves across the country and within closer locations, different schools and grades, new friends, teacher changes, grandparents had become more important through caretaking, new sitters, self-growth (many ways such as learning and physical growth), new stepdads, stepmoms, boyfriends or girlfriends in their parents' lives (and theirs), new children, and babies.

The group went to the tables to draw pictures depicting change of the old and the new, choosing at least one new situation (family, school, themselves, house, friends, hobbies, etc.). While the group was working, the writer spent a few minutes in the corner of the room with each child individually in order to complete the Structured Questionnaire (see Appendix D). As each questionnaire was completed, the child returned to the table for drawing and visiting until it was time to clean up.

When all the drawings and the questionnaires were completed, the children put their chairs in a circle and shared how they

had gone through so many changes so well. It had not been easy, and simple feelings were not involved. There seemed to be a little yes, a little no, and a sort of middle thinking about a lot of things. For example, at times they loved snow but hated the cold weather. The children took a vote about ice cream, roller skating, teachers, friends, sitters, grandparents, swimming, baseball, camp, and meeting together.

Then the writer spoke about how sometimes people were afraid when things were new and different; but the important thing to remember is that they were able to manage and to find good things in change, not only bad things. Contrasts are needed, such as day and night. The children agreed that they did have people to turn to, to be with, and that they, themselves, were pretty great. They reminded each other that this was the last meeting except for the dinner. They then each took a turn shaking everyone's hand in the circle and saying, "I am glad that I know you." They reread Magid and Schreibman's (1980) reference and the meeting ended.

The theme of the May parent meeting also concerned changes since the separation/divorce. A list was generated on the easel and included:

Money is more limited.

Each parent has more responsibility.

It has meant taking on multiple roles with the children.

There are changed relationships with the children, family, old friends.

There are new friends.

Parents live in new locations.

They have gone back to school for training.

They are involved in new sustained relationships.

There is a different standard of living.

Members reviewed and role played a child returning late on Sunday night, before a school day. The directions given were to "show ways to be a neutral yet supportive parent, while not attacking the parent just visited. Think of esteem-building statements that can be made." One such statement was, "Someone sure seems to enjoy your visit. You get brought back later and later."

One parent reported that her child stated, "Daddy said you are taking all his money and he can hardly live now." The group was asked how to handle this situation. The consensus was that the parent should reply, "That is a grown-up problem. Dad and I will discuss it. We both believe in a fair arrangement."

The group also agreed not to attack maleness or femaleness. They were asked why that was important to remember. They again discussed promoting imperfection through owning up to a few of their fallacies. One example was, "I am not very good at riding a bike but you are." They felt that acknowledging a child's feelings was as important as helping with verbalization. Other decisions or rules they came up with were to start new traditions and to keep promises.

As relationships with members of the opposite sex had begun for all of the adult group members, they shared the children's

reactions. They talked about the children's behavior and what they might be trying to say through their speech and actions.

The group discussed the weather in May, as was done with the children, and spoke of all the changes and moods they had weathered in order to arrive at their present state. It was clear that the group as a whole had been less overwhelmed and were more confident that they could accept changes and make it through. The mood was one of realizing positives in their lives while still being aware of less pleasant issues. Everyone was reminded that this meeting was the termination, except for the dinner. Those wanting to speak about the feelings they were experiencing then did so. Program Evaluation Forms (see Appendix E) and the Rating Scales (see Appendix C) were distributed to be returned in June.

The teachers meeting also dealt with separation. This group was thanked for coming, as they really did give up time and they volunteered their involvement. They did say that they enjoyed meeting with colleagues from different settings, making new friendships, and exchanging ideas.

One conclusion that was reached was that good teaching practices were needed for all children, not just for those with particular problems. In addition to divorce, change is part of everyone's life, as in moving and even meeting new teachers. The school can play a major supportive role for children. The teachers reviewed and discussed points to remember: New children should be helped to feel welcome in the group. When a

new entrant comes into a group, a unit can be done on the place where the child is from. Within the classroom, the teacher should provide an atmosphere which promotes self-expression. Holidays create problems and should be planned for. Mother's Day and Father's Day are difficult. Stress should be placed on different lifestyles and how holidays are fostered by business. The children should be helped to verbalize their holiday reactions. They should continue to use art, puppets, dolls and house corners, role playing, clay, active games, punching toys, and music--all ways to relieve tension. Teachers should use pictures, story stimulation cards, and stories to have children practice empathizing with others, expressing feelings about what they saw or heard, then give their opinion about what action should be taken. Using happenings outside of themselves to think about and personalize allows them the practice and mastery needed to accept their own life realities. Making up different endings and seeing from different perspectives, particularly for the older 8-year-olds, sends a message that the child can be in control, can be responsible.

The teachers were given the Program Evaluation Forms (see Appendix E) and the Rating Scales (see Appendix C) to return at the June dinner.

The June dinner meeting was attended by all participants and included one of the guest speakers, additional family members, and invited friends. The event turned out to be relaxed, friendly, and social. Several of the teenagers who were present helped make graffiti art name pictures for all of

the children. Then all those present formed a large circle, sitting on the floor, and shared their favorite happenings from the project. They each gave a word to describe their feelings at the first official meeting and then their feelings at the final meeting. Starters were synonyms such as: "scared, tense, afraid;" contrasted to the final meeting with words such as: "warm, happy, love." The evening concluded with an accordion sing-a-long.

Calendar Plan of Implementation

1985

July

2	Meeting at the Center
3	Library work
10	Center meeting
11	ERIC Library work
25	Mailings were sent out from the Center

August

7	Center meeting to discuss camp children for the project
8	Library work
9	Library work
12	Library work
13	Center meetings
14	Meeting with youth director and director of early childhood programs; afternoon at ERIC Library to review microfiche and films/filmstrips
21	Center meeting with youth director and director of early childhood programs; afternoon in library
26	Lunch with social worker; day spent planning four meetings that she cofacilitated
27	Permission letters were sent to publishers and authors
29	Meeting with social worker and creative dramatist to plan meetings

September

4	Center work and contact made with possible speaker
11	Open House at Center; recontacted players group

September (continued

12	Telephoned parents to confirm appointments; parents visited Center (two did not join)
19	Parents' meeting to do rating sheets and discuss program
20	Parent/teacher appointments
26	Met with teachers at school; two hours of library and scoring of rating sheets
30	Teacher appointments at school; scoring work

October

10	Equipment check and additional shopping for supplies (folders, tags, paper, paint, crayons, magic markers, easel); confirmed with Center for meeting rooms
12	Paperwork and scoring of rating sheets
15	Parents' meeting
22	Teachers' meeting
29	Children's meeting

November

1	Telephone calls and paperwork
3	Telephone calls and paperwork
5	Parents' meeting
7	Telephone calls and paperwork
13	Children's meeting
19	Teachers' meeting
30	Picked up paper dolls, books, and materials

December

3	Parents' meeting
4	Library work; telephone calls
10	Children's meeting
17	Teachers' meeting
18	Library work; telephone calls
30	Library work

1986

January

4	Met with creative dramatist, confirmed plans
14	Joint meeting: parents, children, and teachers
20	Paperwork
28	Telephone calls
30	Telephone calls

February

3	Picked up film from ERIC
6	Parents' meeting
10	Returned film to ERIC
13	Children's meeting
24	Picked up film from ERIC
27	Teachers' meeting

March

4	Parents' meeting
10	Preparation and paperwork
11	Children's meeting
17	Paperwork
18	Teachers' meeting
26	Picked up filmstrip, packets, and materials from ERIC; worked in ERIC Library

April

1	Parents' meeting
8	Children's meeting
9	Paperwork
10	Paperwork
15	Teachers' meeting
16	Returned materials to ERIC; worked in ERIC Library

May

6	Parents' meeting
13	Children's meeting
14	Paperwork
20	Teachers' meeting
21	Paperwork
22	Paperwork
25	Paperwork
26	Paperwork

June

3	Final dinner for all participants Completion of final report and submission to advisor

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

This section of the report contains a discussion of the success criteria for evaluation, reporting the results one by one.

Criterion 1

After the 10-month implementation period, the rating scales will indicate that 75% of the concerning behaviors identified for each child on the pretest will indicate a downward shift from very significant to not significant (see Table 1). Nine children met the criterion on the rating scales. They demonstrated a downward shift of concerning behaviors to nonsignificant levels of at least 75%. Four of the children did not show the amount of improvement necessary to meet the requirement needed to be considered successful. Two of these children did show improvement, however. Two of the children demonstrated an increase in negative behavior. One child did not come from a divorced home so he was not given the rating scale.

Criterion 2

After the 10-month implementation period, 90% of the children will respond positively to 80% (16 of 20) of the items on the Structured Questionnaire (see Table 2). This criterion was not met. Of the two children who did not meet the criterion, one child progressed from a 25% positive reply to a 50% positive reply. One child's positive responses decreased from 70% to 60%.

Table 1

Pre and Postrating Scales

CHILD	PRE	POST	CRITERION MET (75%)	NOT MET
1	VS	NS	Yes	
2	VS	NS	Yes	
3	VS	NS	Yes	
4	VS	NS	Yes	
5	VS	NS	Yes	
6	VS	VS		No
7	VS	NS	Yes	
8	VS	NS	Yes	
9	VS	NS	Yes	
10	VS	S		No
11	VS	NS	Yes	
12	VS	VS		No
13	VS	VS		No
14	-	-	-	

Note: VS = Very Significant

NS = Nonsignificant

Table 2

Pre and Post Structured Questionnaire

CHILD	PRE	POST	CRITERION MET	NOT MET
1	11	17	17	
2	14	18	18	
3	19	20	20	
4	14	19	19	
5	16	20	20	
6	14	12		12
7	13	18	18	
8	13	16	16	
9	15	16	16	
10	12	16	16	
11	11	16	16	
12	13	17	17	
13	5	10		10
14	-	-	-	

Criterion 3

After the 10-month implementation period, 75% of the parents and staff will respond positively to 75% (3 of 4) of the yes-no items on the Program Evaluation Form. This criterion was met. All of the participants' responses were positive to the four questions. This represents a 100% positive response.

Criterion 4

Each parent, child, and staff member will attend at least 70% of the program sessions. This criterion was not met by each of the parents. Ten parents met this criterion; two parents did not. One hundred twenty sessions were possible. Ninety-four sessions were attended. This represents a 78.3% overall attendance rate.

This criterion also was not met by the children. Nine students met this criterion; five students did not. Two students attended six sessions; three students attended four sessions. One hundred forty sessions were possible. One hundred three were attended. This represents a 73.6% overall attendance rate.

This criterion was met by the teachers. Seven teachers who participated in the program reached this criterion. Seventy attendance sessions were possible. Fifty-seven sessions were attended. This represents an 81.4% overall attendance rate.

Justification

There is a considerable number of factors affecting the children's lives. In the case of the one child with increased

negative behaviors, he has been visiting his biological father more but leaving his mother in a new marriage when he goes. He resides in a new home and goes to a new school. These have been new factors this year that were not there before. Though some of the happenings are positive ones, adjustments are required.

The second child has seen her father through a second divorce and, at age 7, had hoped to bring about a reunion of her parents. As this has not happened, both mother and daughter have reacted with a resurgence of sadness.

For several of the parents, anger towards their circumstances remained directed at their original spouses. Their children are in unresolved situations. Their mothers have returned to their parents' homes and are facing issues of boundaries and inadequacy there. They have expressed their wish to have the funds to be independent. It is though they returned to their parents' home as failures. Instead of feeling in control, they speak of erratic arrangements and of the hurt and rejection on all sides. The children are caught in the middle of parents and now, grandparents. When the grandparents threaten to "throw them out," the children feel doubly abandoned and unworthy.

Unexpected Happenings

The teachers came from surrounding towns so that instead of there being in-house school coordination, it became more of an area inservice program. The parent and children's groups also were not Center-based but the members came from other communities and from camp.

The interest and involvement of the widower and his son was a surprise. He was directed to other parent and child bereavement groups and did attend them, but both father and son wanted to continue with this project.

At the beginning of the program, the children participating were ages 2-½ to 8 years. The number of children classified and in special education included one of the two children who did not show significant improvement. The other child had been referred and was waiting for an evaluation. One child was reevaluated and recommended for removal from special education. He was one of the children who met all the criteria.

What was unexpected for the writer was the continually harried lives the parents led. They were attempting to improve their existence but were beset with demands from their children, parents, employment, coursework, and sometimes old and new relationships. Financial concerns and car troubles were frequent companions.

Conclusions

The responses on the program evaluation forms and the children's enthusiasm at meetings clinically indicated accessibility to growth experiences. The children interacted well with each other and with the writer. The four sets of siblings (eight children) helped bridge any language or communication gaps. The older children served as ready interpreters. The writer believes that this meld contributed to the openness of the group and to the clearly supportive relationships which

persisted throughout the project. The age range of the group proved to be a benefit, although it was based on convenience rather than following initial planning which was for separation into an older and a younger group. This was done, as mentioned, because the children were not in attendance at the Center but had to be brought by a parent. The group did consist of seven boys and five girls, a fairly even distribution.

Although the behavioral criterion for the children was not met, many gains did occur. Research shows that boys of separation and divorce fare less well than girls. On this project sample, the four children not making significant progress consisted of two girls and two boys. However, this project is irrelevant regarding this as it is too small a sample and enough time has not passed to assess the full effects of either the divorce or any other impacting life experiences.

The parents' group did not meet the attendance criterion, but everyone expressed positive feelings about the program. A support group was formed, with ongoing additional social interactions. The members of this group appear to have a caring, genuine, involved relationship with one another. They drive each other places, meet for activities, speak to each other at night, and are more than superficial friends.

The teachers' group met the criterion of attendance. However, it was particularly noteworthy that four teachers were from day care centers, two from public school special education, and one from a regular education classroom. If one considers

the amount of time they spent at work and the low salary of the four day care teachers, their dedication is quite clear. The two special education teachers were involved with the girl who did not show improvement. The regular classroom teacher was involved with one of the boys who made little behavioral improvement. They were all truly interested in being of help and in learning.

For several parents and teachers, seeking alternatives to a punitive approach was an outgrowth of the project. The other participants in the groups, by sharing their beliefs and methods of discipline, were of considerable value to the others. The writer believes that they, as participatory members of the group, were the real contributors, more so than a leader-lecturer inservice approach would have been.

Recommendations

1. This type of family educational program can be held anywhere in a community by using school facilities, centers, recreation facilities, religious buildings, mental health facilities, or library meeting rooms. The prevalence of separation and divorce substantiates the need for the availability of such programs.

2. School professionals can benefit from values clarification and from a stronger awareness of the literature available on and for children of separation and divorce. Inservice programs are recommended on this topic.

3. School administrators have become aware of the legal aspects of divorce due to access to information laws of

noncustodial parents and financial aspects of tuition payment with joint custody, as well as from personal experiences. They should be supportive of an identification form for children who are experiencing significant life events. This would be utilized for helpful support and to enable referral to appropriate resources.

Dissemination

A completed report will be given to the Center. An abstract of the report will be given to Cluster 15 members. A report will be donated to the East Orange Learning Resource Center (ERIC), available on loan, accessed, and listed on their Resource Bibliography. A report will be sent to Dr. Harold Burk through the Western Psychological Services.

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APPENDIX A

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Kerri Flanagan

Kerri Flanagan

Appendix B

BURKS' BEHAVIOR RATING SCALES
PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN EDITION
ADMINISTRATION BOOKLET

by Harold F. Burks, Ph.D.

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Name _____ Date _____

School _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Rated by _____ Relationship to Child _____

Please rate **each** and **every** item by putting the number or the most appropriate descriptive statement in the box opposite each item. The 5 descriptive statements are given below:

Number 1. You have not noticed this behavior at all.
Number 2. You have noticed the behavior to a slight degree.
Number 3. You have noticed the behavior to a considerable degree.
Number 4. You have noticed the behavior to a large degree.
Number 5. You have noticed the behavior to a very large degree.

1. Is overobedient. ☐
2. Withdraws quickly from group activities; prefers to play by self. ☐
3. Questions indicate a worry about the future. ☐
4. Blushes easily. ☐
5. Is difficult to get to know. ☐
6. Is easily led. ☐
7. Disinterested in play activity of others. ☐
8. Upset if makes a mistake. ☐
9. Wants others to do things for him. ☐
10. Shows many fears. ☐
11. Shows little feeling when others are upset. ☐
12. Shows excessive guilt for wrong doing. ☐
13. Worries too much. ☐
14. Does not show feelings. ☐
15. Is upset if things do not turn out perfect. ☐
16. Clings to adults. ☐
17. Appears tense. ☐
18. Is shy. ☐
19. Blames himself if things go wrong. ☐
20. Seeks constant praise. ☐
21. Appears nervous. ☐
22. Is dependent on others to lead him around. ☐

1 2 3 4

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Please rate **each** and **every** item by putting the number or the most appropriate descriptive statement in the box opposite each item. The 5 descriptive statements are given below.

Number **1.** You have not noticed this behavior at all.
Number **2.** You have noticed the behavior to a slight degree.
Number **3.** You have noticed the behavior to a considerable degree.
Number **4.** You have noticed the behavior to a large degree.
Number **5.** You have noticed the behavior to a very large degree.

23. Follows directions poorly. ☐
24. Cannot finish what he is doing; jumps to something else. ☐
25. Avoids physical contact in play. ☐
26. Thinks little of his own abilities. ☐
27. Has trouble holding on to things. ☐
28. Attention span is short. ☐
29. Has trouble remembering things. ☐
30. Is easily satisfied with poor performance. ☐
31. Is easily distracted, lacks continuity of effort and perseverance. ☐
32. Shows poor coordination in large muscle activities. ☐
33. Gets hurt in physical play. ☐
34. Does not show imagination. ☐
35. Attention span not increased by punishment or reward. ☐
36. Is easily frustrated and gives up passively. ☐
37. Spills milk and drops food. ☐
38. Acts silly. ☐
39. Gives inappropriate responses. ☐
40. Appears physically lethargic. ☐
41. Cannot shift responses to meet problem situations. ☐
42. Avoids competition. ☐
43. Drawings and paintings are messy. ☐
44. Will not rough and tumble with others. ☐
45. Does not ask questions. ☐
46. Plays the clown of the class. ☐
47. Accidently runs into people and objects. ☐
48. Shows limited vocabulary. ☐
49. Shows little self-confidence. ☐
50. Gets tired quickly. ☐
51. Shows erratic, flighty or scattered behavior. ☐

5 6 7 8 9

Please rate **each** and **every** item by putting the number or the most appropriate descriptive statement in the box opposite each item. The 5 descriptive statements are given below:

Number **1.** You have not noticed this behavior at all.
Number **2.** You have noticed the behavior to a slight degree.
Number **3.** You have noticed the behavior to a considerable degree.
Number **4.** You have noticed the behavior to a large degree.
Number **5.** You have noticed the behavior to a very large degree.

52. Tells unbelievable stories. ☐
53. Appears distressed. ☐
54. Rejects classmates in hostile manner. ☐
55. Cannot control self (will speak out or jump out of seat). ☐
56. Feelings easily hurt. ☐
57. Is unaware of what is going on around him. ☐
58. Emotional reactions wrong (laugh when should be sad, etc.) ☐
59. Gives picture of "poor me." ☐
60. Is impulsive. ☐
61. Associates with loners. ☐
62. Sulks. ☐
63. Shows explosive and unpredictable behavior. ☐
64. Rotates or rocks his body. ☐
65. Wears unusual clothing styles. ☐
66. Seems to welcome punishment. ☐
67. Secretly laughs or talks to himself. ☐
68. Acts as nonconformist. ☐
69. Becomes overexcited easily. ☐
70. Deliberately puts himself in position of being reprimanded. ☐
71. Shows tics and grimaces without apparent reason. ☐
72. Is hyperactive and restless. ☐
73. Shows daydreaming. ☐
74. Does not try to make friends by acting like other children. ☐
75. Uses unintelligible language. ☐
76. Appears unhappy. ☐

10 11 12 13

Please rate each and every item by putting the number or the most appropriate descriptive statement in the box opposite each item. The 5 descriptive statements are given below:

Number 1. You have not noticed this behavior at all.
Number 2. You have noticed the behavior to a slight degree.
Number 3. You have noticed the behavior to a considerable degree.
Number 4. You have noticed the behavior to a large degree.
Number 5. You have noticed the behavior to a very large degree.

77. Is truant. ☐
78. Maintains other children pick on him. ☐
79. Teases others. ☐
80. Will not take suggestions from others. ☐
81. Becomes angry quickly. ☐
82. Complains he never gets his fair share of things. ☐
83. Is involved in undesirable escapades. ☐
84. Laughs when other are in trouble. ☐
85. Becomes angry if asked to do something. ☐
86. Will not forgive others (holds grudge). ☐
87. Does things his own way. ☐
88. Hits or pushes others. ☐
89. Shows little respect for authority. ☐
90. Denies responsibility for own actions. ☐
91. Flares up at children if teased or pushed. ☐
92. Takes things which do not belong to him. ☐
93. Accuses others of things they actually did not do. ☐
94. Displays a don't care attitude; does what he wants. ☐
95. Makes fun of others. ☐
96. Is stubborn and uncooperative. ☐
97. Does not follow through on responsibilities. ☐
98. Explodes under stress. ☐
99. Wants to boss others. ☐
100. Tells falsehoods. ☐
101. Is quickly frustrated and loses emotional control. ☐
102. Is rebellious if disciplined. ☐
103. Complains others do not like him. ☐
104. Plays tricks on other children. ☐
105. Is tardy. ☐

14 15 16 17 18

Appendix C

BURKS' BEHAVIOR RATING SCALES

ADMINISTRATION BOOKLET

by Harold F. Burks, Ph.D.

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Name _____ Date _____

School _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Rated by _____ Relationship to Child _____

Please rate **each** and **every** item by putting the number or the most appropriate descriptive statement in the box opposite each item. The 5 descriptive statements are given below:

Number **1.** You have not noticed this behavior at all.
Number **2.** You have noticed the behavior to a slight degree.
Number **3.** You have noticed the behavior to a considerable degree.
Number **4.** You have noticed the behavior to a large degree.
Number **5.** You have noticed the behavior to a very large degree.

1. Shows erratic, flighty or scattered behavior. ☐
2. Questions indicate a worry about the future. ☐
3. Maintains other children pick on him. ☐
4. Does not ask questions. ☐
5. Upset if makes a mistake. ☐
6. Perseverates, cannot shift responses. ☐
7. Is easily distracted, lacks continuity of effort and perseverance. ☐
8. Complains he never gets his fair share of things. ☐
9. Gives inappropriate responses. ☐
10. Shows overremorse for wrong doing. ☐
11. Attention span not increased by punishment or reward. ☐
12. Does not show imagination. ☐
13. Will not forgive others. ☐
14. Is upset if things do not turn out perfect. ☐
15. Attention span is short. ☐
16. Has trouble remembering things. ☐
17. Accuses others of things they actually did not do. ☐
18. Shows poor vocabulary. ☐
19. Complains others do not like him. ☐
20. Cannot finish what he is doing; jumps to something else. ☐
21. Blames himself if things go wrong. ☐
22. Does not show common sense. ☐

10 1 16 8

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Please rate **each** and **every** item by putting the number or the most appropriate descriptive statement in the box opposite each item. The 5 descriptive statements are given below:
Number **1.** You have not noticed this behavior at all.
Number **2.** You have noticed the behavior to a slight degree.
Number **3.** You have noticed the behavior to a considerable degree.
Number **4.** You have noticed the behavior to a large degree.
Number **5.** You have noticed the behavior to a very large degree.

23. Shows many fears. ☐
24. Tells bizarre stories. ☐
25. Shows poor reading. ☐
26. Becomes overexcited easily. ☐
27. Uses unintelligible language. ☐
28. Displays a don't care attitude; does what he wants. ☐
29. Shows poor spelling. ☐
30. Tells falsehoods. ☐
31. Is hyperactive and restless. ☐
32. Shows daydreaming. ☐
33. Appears tense. ☐
34. Does not follow through on promises. ☐
35. Shows explosive and unpredictable behavior. ☐
36. Shows tics and grimaces without apparent reason. ☐
37. Worries too much. ☐
38. Takes things which do not belong to him. ☐
39. Follows academic directions poorly. ☐
40. Secretly laughs or talks to himself. ☐
41. Shows little respect for authority. ☐
42. Blushes easily. ☐
43. Rotates or rocks his body. ☐
44. Assignments are poorly written. ☐
45. Is tardy. ☐
46. Is impulsive. ☐
47. Makes weird drawings. ☐
48. Is involved in undesirable escapades. ☐
49. Appears nervous. ☐
50. Is unaware of what is going on around him. ☐
51. Homework is not done or incomplete. ☐
52. Cannot control self (will speak out or jump out of seat). ☐
53. Is truant. ☐

2 9 11 19 12

Please rate each and every item by putting the number or the most appropriate descriptive statement in the box opposite each item. The 5 descriptive statements are given below:

Number 1. You have not noticed this behavior at all.
Number 2. You have noticed the behavior to a slight degree.
Number 3. You have noticed the behavior to a considerable degree.
Number 4. You have noticed the behavior to a large degree.
Number 5. You have noticed the behavior to a very large degree.

54. Avoids physical contact in play. ☐
55. Becomes angry quickly. ☐
56. Acts as non-conformist. ☐
57. Is stubborn and uncooperative ☐
58. Has trouble holding on to things. ☐
59. Gets hurt in physical play. ☐
60. Is rebellious if disciplined. ☐
61. Becomes angry if asked to do something. ☐
62. Shows poor coordination in large muscle activities. ☐
63. Wears unusual clothing styles. ☐
64. Gets tired quickly. ☐
65. Handwriting is poor. ☐
66. Denies responsibility for own actions. ☐
67. Is quickly frustrated and loses emotional control. ☐
68. Associated with loners. ☐
69. Drawings and paintings are messy. ☐
70. Does things his own way. ☐
71. Will not rough and tumble with others. ☐
72. Accidently runs into people and objects. ☐
73. Explodes under stress. ☐
74. Rejects classmates in hostile manner. ☐
75. Appears physically lethargic. ☐
76. Will not take suggestions from others. ☐
77. Flares up at classmates if teased or pushed. ☐
78. "Style" of behaving deliberately different from most. ☐

6 7 18 13 15

Please rate **each** and **every** item by putting the number or the most appropriate descriptive statement in the box opposite each item. The 5 descriptive statements are given below:

Number **1.** You have not noticed this behavior at all.
Number **2.** You have noticed the behavior to a slight degree.
Number **3.** You have noticed the behavior to a considerable degree.
Number **4.** You have noticed the behavior to a large degree.
Number **5.** You have noticed the behavior to a very large degree.

79. Sulks.....
80. Is difficult to get to know.....
81. Depreciates and distrusts own abilities.....
82. Laughs when others are in trouble.....
83. Is dependent on others to lead him around.....
84. Hits or pushes others.....
85. Appears unhappy.....
86. Shows little feeling when others are upset.....
87. Is overobedient.....
88. Is easily satisfied with inferior performance.....
89. Seems to welcome punishment.....
90. Withdraws quickly from group activities; prefers to work by self.....
91. Avoids competition.....
92. Wants to boss others.....
93. Is easily led.....
94. Is shy.....
95. Deliberately puts himself in position of being criticized.....
96. Is sarcastic.....
97. Is easily frustrated and gives up passively.....
98. Does not show feelings.....
99. Gives picture of "poor me."
100. Teases others.....
101. Acts silly.....
102. Wants others to do things for him.....
103. Feelings easily hurt.....
104. Shows little self-confidence.....
105. Clings to adults.....
106. Plays tricks on other children.....
107. Appears disinterested in class work of others.....
108. Appears depressed.....
109. Seeks constant praise.....
110. Plays the clown of the class.....

17 [illegible] 4 14 3

APPENDIX D

STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire

1. Do you believe that your Mom or Dad have changed their feelings towards you since they divorced each other?
2. Are you ever afraid that you might lose or be left by the parent you are now living with?
3. Are you angry about the divorce?
4. Do you wish that your parents would marry each other again?
5. Do you believe that you did anything to cause the divorce?
6. Do you believe that you could do anything that would bring your parents back together again?
7. Do you feel as if your Mom or Dad speak through you, with you as a messenger, at times?
8. Do your Mom and Dad talk to each other,particularly on the telephone?
9. Do the things that Mom or Dad say about each other upset you?
10. Are you able to say what you want to, discuss anything with Mom or Dad?
11. Do you believe that Mom or Dad listen to you and understand your feelings?
12. Do you feel free to call the parent you are not living with whenever you want to?
13. Do you like the care that you receive and the activities you experience during your visits with the parent you are not living with?
14. Have your told your friends that your parents are separated or divorced?
15. Have you told anyone at the Center or the school about your parents' separation or divorce?
16. Do you have friends whose parents are also separated or divorced?
17. Do you think that they have some of the same feelings that you do about the changes in their family?

18. Has your life changed since the separation or divorce? In what ways?

19. Do you think that there is anything that you can do to make your family feel better?

20. Is there anything that your family can do to make you feel better?

APPENDIX E

PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM

Program Evaluation

1. Did you enjoy being a member of the group? Yes__No___

2. Did everyone in the group get a chance to talk if they wanted to? Yes__ No___

3. Which activity did you enjoy the most? _____

   _____

   _____

   Why?_____

4. Which activity did you enjoy the least? _____

   _____

   Why? _____

5. Do you feel the group helped you in any way? Yes___No___

   If yes, How? _____

   _____

   If no, why not? _____

   _____

6. Would you encourage others to take part in a group of this nature? Yes___No___

   If yes, why? _____

   _____

   If no, why not? _____

   _____

Group Attendance Form __Parent ___Staff ___Child

Names	Sessions										Comments
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

APPENDIX G

PARENT LETTER

Dear Parent,

We are offering a series of workshops designed to help clarify parenting issues related to separation and divorce. The intent of the program is to minimize negative effects on the children.

Separate monthly meetings will be held with parents, children and activity staff members.

The workshops will give both parents and children an opportunity to share their feelings with others experiencing similar situations and to become involved in resolving resentment and misconceptions. New ways to cope will be explored.

I will be coordinating the programs. My background includes school psychologist, state licensed marriage and family counselor, learning disabilities teacher consultant, teacher of the handicapped and early childhood education.

Special activities and guest speakers will be included.

If your family has recently gone through a divorce, or are about to do so, and you feel that you and your child could benefit from this experience, please fill out and return the form below to me as soon as possible. After I receive your return, I will contact you for an appointment so that we will be able to discuss the goals, content, format, and answer each others questions. Thank youfor your support of this program.

Sincerely,

Sally Schein

Sally Schein

- -

Name _____

Child's Name _____Age_____

Address _____

Telephone_____

Return to:

APPENDIX H

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POSITIVE FEEDBACK

AVOID	AIM AT
Arguing directly against whatever the other parent has been saying.	Listening to what your child has to say, and taking a friendly interest.
Trying to pull the other parent down in your child's estimation.	Answering questions in a way that expands conversation, i.e., without laying down the law.
Trying to persuade your child that your view of everything is the right one.	Noticing any problems, where you might be able to help.
Reacting defensively at any hint of criticism from child or other parent.	Being around on a dependable, reliable basis.
Preaching any particular religious, moral, or social doctrines that you know are contradictory to the home views.	Showing that you have your own standards and that, even if these are different from those at home, at least you are consistent.
Trying to solve your problems through your child.	Enjoying time together, rather than treating it as an opportunity to impress or persuade.

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Reactions When a Parent Leaves

Age of Child	Mother Leaves	Father Leaves	Key Reactions to Visits from the Non-custodial Parent
Under 2 months	May notice very little.	Notices nothing.	
Up to 2½ years	Emotional and behavioral problems of varying severity.	May notice very little.	Uncomplicated pleasure, unless the visit is associated with anxiety on the part of the resident parent. Concern over long gaps away from mother (over half a day) unless routine.
From 2½ years to 6 years	Sense of major change, loss of focal point. Strong tendency to deny the fact of separation, turning to resentment, bitterness. Concern over personal responsibility for "driving parent away."	Sense of change which is major if the family has been very close. Tendency to vary between apparent acceptance of separation and belief that it is only temporary. Increased dependence on mother.	Pleasure, becoming dependent on some kind of regular contact with absent parent. Reassurance needed about acceptance by that parent. Seeking for tokens of affection, approval. Attempts to delay departure at end of visit or to inspire reconciliation.
From 6 years to 9 years	Sadness is persistent. Tends to be hard to amuse except superficially. Worry about continuation of normal life; about stability of what they know and need.	Sadness. Some clinging to mother. Search for compensation in possessions, and/or activities. Some alternation between acceptance and hope of reunification.	Pleasure, continued need for regularity of contact and increased demand for tokens, presents. Some "paying back" of the absent parent through rough behavior or disobedience. Curiosity about the parent's life. No conflict over double standard: pro-mother and pro-father in turn.

(continued)

Age of Child	Mother Leaves	Father Leaves	Key Reactions to Visits from the Non-custodial Parent
From 9 years to 14 years	Sense of loss, but emotional response tied to nature of relationship with mother. Girls vary from boys. Daughters depend on friends of same sex outside home, or resent their puberty strongly. Boys may gravitate more towards their father.	Sense of loss; emotional response varies (as when mother leaves). Sex difference here, too: girls may become suspicious of or reject the male sex, while boys may feel less confident socially (since they have been rejected as companions).	Pleasure in visits varies according to degree of blame attached to absent parent, and to sense of rejection. Pattern of visits may be challenged. Some preference for company of own close friends--but no real break wanted for long with the absent parent. Relationship has to develop; more compromise needed.
From 14 years to 16 years	Depending on maturity, they take a more realistic view. But an immature teenager, with puberty problems, and/or social self-doubt, may interpret the event as underlining his own adequacy.	Depends on how close they have been, e.g., on how far a son has been modeling himself on his father (consciously or not), and how far a daughter has been depending on his response for approval of her feminity.	Success becomes increasingly dependent on having mutual interests and enjoying each other's company as such, i.e., not just because of the blood connection. Where less blame is attached, children sometimes revert to the "double standard" of the 6-9 period.

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